On Art in the
Ancient Near East

Volume 1
Of the First Millennium BCE

Irene J. Winter

On Art in the Ancient Near East

Culture and History of the Ancient Near East

On Art in the Ancient Near East

Volume I
Of the First Millennium B.C.E.

Irene J. Winter

BRILL

VOLUME I
OF THE FIRST MILLENIUM B.C.E.

CONTENTS

INTERACTIONS OF TIME AND SPACE

INTRODUCTION

Anyone who has already done the task of gathering together previously published essays aimed at heterogeneous audiences and intended for different purposes into single volumes will know, and those who may do it in future are likely to discover, that the reading through of one's own essays published over a 35-year period is as daunting, disorienting, and humbling an experience as any in a long professional career. Not everything could be included; hence, decisions relative to durability and overall mission had to be made. Errors—since noted in the scholarly literature and pointed out sometimes cordially, sometimes gleefully, sometimes firmly—had to be endured, and changes/inconsistencies in the readings of personal and geographical names, as well as advancements in evidence and thought in the scholarly literature had to be ignored, lest the project take on massive proportions of self-editing, up-dating and contextualizing. In addition, some sense of the whole had to be articulated in the framing of an Introduction that ideally would be sustained once texts and images were re-formatted into a unit: one that would, it could only be hoped, somehow convey both the integrity of the parts and a broader picture generated by the whole.

Had two book-length studies once envisioned—the first based upon the dissertation on North Syria and Ivory Carving of the early first millennium B.C.E. (1973) and the second on Public Monuments and Early State Formation of the third millennium B.C.E. (1989)—ever materialized, the present volumes would not have been necessary. But it became clear early on that I was an essayist, not a book-writer, and, despite a good deal of soul-searching, I have remained true to that calling.

What has become evident in the course of the present exercise is that "formation" in the French sense of intellectual training is discernable, even when one thinks it is not explicit. Thus, I, at least, can see the early anthropologist (B.A.), the Near Eastern archaeologist/regional specialist (M.A.), and the art historian (Ph.D.) emerge at differing moments and with different weighting, depending upon the problem at hand. And I can also see how much learning takes place *after* one's formal schooling is over: particularly what one owes to those exchanges that take place in the classroom as a teacher, as well as in the international community of scholarship and the intellectual environment(s) of

whatever professional institution(s) one inhabits. In brief, "formation" is an on-going process.

Two volumes are planned for these selected articles: one focused largely on the first millennium B.C.E. and the other on the third millennium, both B.C.E. and C.E.! Although the third millennium B.C.E. is earlier in time, work on the first millennium was largely done earlier, and the intellectual engagement over time was thought to offer something of a narrative in itself. Hence the decision was made to bring to Volume I the later *works of* ancient Mesopotamian art, but the prior *work on* ancient art. Several of the ivory studies and the cultural interaction studies included here came before those dealing with Assyrian sculpture; yet overall, if one were to conceive of the volume as a whole, then the historical and artistic landscape of the larger polity seemed to offer a better starting point for placing luxury arts, political relations, and the complexities of inter-cultural exchange into their respective contexts.

What surprised me greatly were the discernable threads that had woven their individual ways through the collectivity. It is these threads I should like to pull out by way of Introduction.

* * *

The articles reproduced in the present volume cluster naturally into three sub-sets: those dealing with the message-bearing component of Assyrian palaces, sculptures, and their decorative programs (Chapters 1–4); those dealing with luxury goods, largely ivory and metalwork, produced in surrounding regions but often gathered within Assyrian contexts as well (Chapters 5–10); and those with a focus on regional or cultural interactions, often with Assyria as one of the players (Chapters 12–15). Essays have been organized more or less in order of publication within each grouping, with the result that, to me at least, the individual studies often seem to talk to one another, or at least to participate in a meta-narrative of sorts.

Principal in that recognizable meta-narrative is that for the art historian, while the primary data one is working on fall into the category of material culture, essentially works identified as 'art' within our own cultural domain, one is never not (double negative intended) conscious of history and therefore of being an 'historian.' Thus the artworks are both subject to visual analysis and also requiring of context—needing to be seen as representative of times and places where function and value, production and consumption, affect and effect, were essential

components of their having been brought into being. The assumption here is that it *is* possible for the historian to use material evidence toward an understanding of the past, not simply to provide a mirror of the present in a reading of a presumed or invented past.

A corollary to the essential relationship between the history of the artwork and the artwork in history is the placement of the author, any author, in a matrix of intellectual history. In the present case, one can discern differences in approach, supporting literature and concerns between those articles written in the 1970s and those of the succeeding decades. At the same time, the cross-cutting concerns, materials and approaches addressed over time suggest that one's "formation" can provide a unifying factor and make almost self-evident the developmental trajectory in a body of scholarly production.

Under the banner of the art historian as *historian*, several underlying methodological consistencies emerge. First and foremost, it is clear that art historical analysis is never independent of the archaeological data that produced the artifacts (e.g. Chapters 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15)—whether with respect to findspot and spatial distribution, to classification and typology, or to dating and the nature of assemblages as distinct from individual pieces.

Second, a dependence upon and interaction with textual data, a consciousness of progress in the publication of the corpora of textual sources, and a grappling with the relationship between verbal and visual representation is never far from the surface (e.g. Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 11, 12, 13, 15). Texts appear on, or in direct association with, some objects, and are essential for providing historical context for others. My debts to philological colleagues working on the languages of ancient Mesopotamia are clearly great, as is my appreciation in retrospect that at least a preliminary study of those languages had been part of my own required graduate curriculum. Language itself is argued to play a role in understanding/decoding the imagery; and in two cases at least, it is suggested that the power of the accompanying image may well have exercised primary agency in legitimizing textual proclamations. In addition, a variety of themes can be shown to persist across time and space, as evident in both textual accounts and imagery. All of this argues strongly for the importance of art historians trained in ancient languages, working with the textual record as well as with philologists, toward the cultural and historical interweaving of both text and image.

Third, since the artwork originally functioned within a particular historical and cultural context, its universe of meaning includes not only the physical properties and archaeological surround of the finished artifact-cum-artwork, but also analysis of aspects of the work's production and consumption. The technologies and materials of fabrication, the political and economic system within which the work was circulated, the historical context of value within both its arena of production and distribution, and its association with long-distance trade and patterns of exchange offer crucial perspectives on ancient meaning (e.g. Chapters 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15).

And finally, fourth, while a given study may privilege a particular art/artifact type, in general it is impossible to isolate such classes of work from other classes of artistic production. Moveable works intersect with fixed works (e.g. Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 9, 12, 14); different media may display similarities or differences that require assessment (e.g. Chapters 3, 8, 9, 11); different, albeit contemporary, regions can show quite distinct patterns of receptivity to outside influences, as well as distinct patterns of engagement with the distribution of their own products (e.g. Chapters 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 15).

While these threads are readily discernable as components of the specialist literature in the subfield, other threads may be seen to be woven through on a regular basis that are more related to the field of art history writ large. Disciplinary tools of analysis—style, iconography, composition, decorative program—are deployed throughout (e.g. Chapters 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11); connections to the art history of other periods and places appear not infrequently, for purposes of analogy, amplification and/or differentiation (e.g. Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 10, 11); theoretical discourses—especially regarding discipline-based issues, such as the role of (visual) narrative, the underlying concepts reflected in the act of representation, and the affective properties of the artwork—are invoked in order to place the study within a discursive field (e.g. Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 11, 13, 14).

On some occasions it also became apparent that the material under discussion in a given study could perhaps contribute to those discourses—through nuance in problem identification and solution, through critique, or through the opening of issues beyond their initial conception (e.g. Chapters 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 11, 13). I must confess that I take pleasure in these moments: how on reflection Chapter 2 adds to discussions of the issue of 'likeness' and therefore to notions of 'the portrait' across the history of art; how Chapter 3 engages issues of scale

and therefore the 'referential' in the reading of iconography; how Chapter 11 argues to discard uni-directional perception of 'influence' toward a more nuanced understanding of 'reception.' What these occasions and others suggest is that the less populated and less popular subfields within art history are nonetheless capable of advancing discourse, not just consuming and applying advances made elsewhere....

To that end, it will be seen that issues of methodology are taken on directly in a number of instances, while theoretical frameworks are more often than not made explicit. A number of colleagues whose contributions to the study of ancient art have been substantial have resisted such formulations over the years, arguing by implication that method and theory should be left implicit, to be discerned by the informed reader. Yet I have found that, for me, robust interpretation requires consciousness of the implications and limitations of one's methodological approaches and theoretical positions. Furthermore, I would insist that there are no theoretically neutral positions in the reading of an artwork. Rather, there are positions of which the author is either conscious or not conscious; and when conscious, there remains the option of positions stated or positions unstated. Making one's interpretive apparatus apparent draws upon the radical insistences of my own formative generation, in archaeology as well as in art history, and also opens up possibilities for discourse across the boundaries of specialist subfields and across disciplines. I have therefore made a frequent decision to permit both methodology and theory to become part of inquiry.

It will also be seen that cross-cultural references are not infrequent in the works collected here, as well as in Volume II. Anthropologists are trained to do this more than art historians, philologists and regional-studies specialists—post-modern arguments regarding incommensurability and relativism notwithstanding. I would stress that I believe one can learn a great deal from parallel studies dealing with the archaeologies of monuments in other early states, and from the role of imagery within related socio-political and cultural systems. Throughout, my aim has been at least in part to initiate conversations with Mesoamericanists, medievalists and South Asianists in art history no less than with Mesopotamianists; and to engage with cultural historians, philologists and anthropologists no less than with art historians.

In sum, I would hope it might be clear from the present assemblage that the art historian working on materials of the ancient Near East is inevitably close to the archaeological record—both for obvious issues of chronology and context and also for essentials such as the amplification

of meaning, value and practice. At the same time, when there is a preserved textual record, the art historian is never independent of that material, whether related to inscriptions *on* works, directly related *to* works, or offering context *for* works. Finally, at the same time as one is closely intertwined with on-going work in the specialist subfield broadly defined, this art historian at least would argue for engagement with contemporary intellectual discourse, not only within the discipline of art history, but also within related fields of the Humanities and the Social Sciences. To have been engaged with such discourse(s), and to pursue, as Heidegger put it, "the *work* of the work of art," has been the joy of scholarship.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

THE ASSYRIAN PALACE AND RELIEF CARVING

ROYAL RHETORIC AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF HISTORICAL NARRATIVE IN NEO-ASSYRIAN RELIEFS

Definitions

While "story" is a major component in narrative, the terms are not synonymous. Story evokes content. Narrative, however, demands that one address oneself at the same time to both content and structure—what Culler (1975:244) would call the means by which "the end is made present throughout the work"; and what Chatman (1979:176) has called discourse: "the expressional means of presenting content." Narrative, then, is structured content, ordered by the "telling" which is a necessary condition of the form.

The genre seems inextricably tied to words: oral or written, fiction or nonfiction. Even when narrative is pursued into the visual realm, the notions of word and story remain, as does the frequent assumption of a text *behind* the images (Weitzmann 1957, 1970; Schapiro 1973:9). Stimulated by analyses of contemporary visual media and their impact, however, I should like to re-examine an ancient situation in which, although "event" may be interchangeable with "story," similar principles of sequence and flow appropriate to narrative (i.e., content plus telling) pertain; yet the text exists parallel to rather than behind the image, and the totality of images itself creates a "narrative space."

I speak of a particular segment of the ancient Mesopotamian world: the Neo-Assyrian period, for which monuments have been preserved roughly from the ninth through the seventh century B.C., and during which time there was an extraordinary flowering of "historical narrative" in the representational art associated with royal palaces. To better understand this phenomenon, it is essential to deal not only with the givens of the narratives themselves but also with the "storyteller" behind

---

(in this case, the king) and with the intended audience ahead—not only *what* story was being told, but *how* it was told and *why*.

Several scholars have dealt with the particular nature of the art of this period (Groenewegen-Frankfort 1951; Frankfort 1954; Moortgat 1969; Akurgal 1968; Reade 1965, 1979a, b, c), and a symposium held at the University of Chicago in 1956 attempted to explore narration in ancient art specifically. Although studies on the nature of literary narrative have become far more precise and sophisticated in the past 20 years, the papers from the Chicago symposium have stood more or less alone in attempting to grapple with the issues of visual narration in the ancient world. The general definition was provided by Kraeling (1957:43): "Narrative art is identified as representations of a specific event, involving specific persons, where the action and persons *might* be historical, but not necessarily." Within that framework, Perkins (1957:55, 61) emphasized both the use of "episodes"—or a very abbreviated segment or segments to stand for the whole sequence—as typical of early Mesopotamian art; and the frequent selection of the "culminating scene," or moment of climax, where the completion of the story was to take place in the viewer's mind. In this, as with most art, the primacy of a text is assumed, as well as the individual's familiarity with the text that would allow recognition of the pertinent episodes. Güterbock (1957:62) came closer to the particular situation to be discussed here when he insisted that, in order to qualify as narrative, not only must a specific rather than a generic event be pictured, but it must also incorporate some coherent progression of events: the story must be "told," not "implied."

Beyond this, it is essential to recognize that there are many types of narrative. The term may be applied equally to representations of myth, lore, and ritual, or, as in the present case, to the representation of a specific historical event—not generic emblem or hieroglyph, but individuals and elements presumed to have been associated with the actual spatio-temporal experience. Moscati, therefore (1963:14–15), defined historical art in the ancient Near East as "related to a concrete, momentary fact that cannot be repeated," distinct thereby from the ritual or mythic depiction which goes beyond location in time and space, or the cyclical, where it is precisely the recurrent and not the specific that is stressed. In this commitment to deal in "real" events, historical narrative in art functions exactly as historical narrative in text (see White 1980), where there is further evidenced a strong inclination to support the historicity of the event precisely through the display of its formal coherence-as-story.

Our "historical narratives," then, occur as representations on architectural reliefs of alabaster and limestone which lined the walls of selected rooms in Neo-Assyrian palaces. The genre may be further defined—in the beginning of our period, at least—as depicting a quite limited universe of historical events: specifically, scenes of battle and tribute, with the king as both author (his palace) and subject (principal actor).

Even without recourse to the actual representations, some of the visual implications of such scenes should be evident: they demand action, and thereby the likelihood of profile views and directionality (the profile being most effective when heightened interest in action is required—that is, engagement in a space which does not necessarily include the viewer as participant; Schapiro 1973:29). In addition, the disposition of figures is likely to be in sequence, such that the narrative may be "read," and specific elements—in this case, topographical features and signature elements of dress, headgear, or associated goods—carefully selected to provide the "particularity" of the place and the moment. These elements, especially, become verifiers of the "truth" of the scene, the spatial immediacy that modifies the temporal anteriority of the action—what Barthes has called the illogical conjunction in certain highly manipulated but purportedly "real" images between here-now and there-then (1977b:44).

The historical narratives do not constitute the only decoration of the palaces; the buildings are embellished in addition with monumental gateway sculptures, and with apotropaic and cultic themes in relief that have a long history in the art of ancient Mesopotamia. But the display on large-scale architectural reliefs is new, as is the incorporation of the historical scenes. Like the modern news photograph, the narratives attempt to provide a "pure spectatorial consciousness of 'historical reality,' as distinct from the more projective 'magical' consciousness" of the other reliefs (Barthes 1977b:45). They are aimed at "a kind of zero-degree of reality" as opposed to the fictive elements of myth or legend (White 1979:215), but the operational word here is "aimed," for in the art of the period, as with the written texts as well (Liverani 1979), there is an ideological "end" to the apparent historicity of the representations. In fact, content is carefully manipulated, and the spectator is enjoined to participate in a foregone conclusion: only the enemy fall; the Assyrians never lose and, given the strength of the king and the benevolence of the gods, are never even wounded.

The historical record is thereby selected and arranged; reality is invoked, but the artifact of construction is also apparent (White 1973).

The tension is thus immediately created between the supposedly denotative (*what* is being told) and the obviously connotative (*how* the story is being told)—further enhanced by the very fact of the presence of these (hi)stories in the palace in the first place (suggesting meaningful context, the *why* told). And embedded even more deeply, in the very presence of the historical narratives, is the "extent to which social authority and narrativization are mutually implicated in one another" (White, forthcoming).

Trends evident during the course of the Neo-Assyrian period include a development toward greater use of the pictorial field and spatial dimensions, the inclusion of more pervasive identifiers such as topographic details, and the addition of parallel information in the form of inscribed epigraphs or labels directly on the reliefs. But these developments do not substantially change the genre; they merely serve to increase the particularity and the historicity of the scenes. That this evolution is tied to political developments within the Neo-Assyrian Empire I shall endeavor to demonstrate below; however, the desired effect of the narrative seems to remain constant, the mode itself once established changing only in degree.

Therefore, it is perhaps most interesting to emphasize the beginning of the sequence: the initiation of the genre and the reasons underlying the use of historical narrative as decoration. To do so, we must look at the extraordinary achievement of Assurnasirpal II of Assyria (885–856 B.C.), who established his capital at Nimrud (Kalḫu) in about the fifth year of his reign and completed his primary residence, the Northwest Palace, as it has been called by its excavators, sometime probably between 865 and 859 (see plan, fig. 1; Postgate and Reade 1977:304–307 for discussion and complete bibliography of excavation; also Reade 1965:119 and de Filippi 1977:168 re date; and Layard 1849b, Budge 1914, and Meusczyński 1975 for publication of the reliefs). In his Banquet Stele inscription, commemorating festivities for the inauguration, Assurnasirpal himself announces the decoration of the palace walls with scenes representing his heroic deeds (Grayson 1976: § 677); and indeed excavations have confirmed that the palace was lavishly decorated with wall paintings, colossal portal sculpture, and architectural reliefs, concentrating on those which we would call "historical narrative" in the most important Throneroom, Room B, and on its external north facade.[1]

---

[1] According to the notes taken by Rassam, narrative reliefs were not confined to the Throneroom but were also to be found in parts of the west wing of the palace

The Throneroom of Assurnasirpal II

Convention and Innovation

Room B constitutes the core of the public reception area of the palace, approached from two sides: either directly from the large Court D, to the north, or from the smaller Court Y and anteroom F, to the south (plan, fig. 1, and detailed plan with reliefs, fig. 2). The room is long in proportion to its width, measuring some 45.5 by 10.5 meters, and, judging from the thickness of the walls, likely to have stood at least 6 to 8 meters high (Meusczyński 1975; the height based upon reconstruction by Reade, cited in Mallowan 1966:454). At the short, eastern end, before a niche in the wall, stood a low socle clearly intended to have served as a throne base. Colossal human-headed bulls and lions flanked the major doorways "c" and "d," and butted up against these were the orthostats on which the reliefs were carved. These slabs averaged 2.7 meters in total height and were sunk into the ground for support, such that from 2.2 to 2.3 meters stood above ground. Each slab was inscribed across the middle with a complete version of what is known as Assurnasirpal's Standard Inscription, a text of from 18 to 26 lines presenting his titulary and major achievements (Grayson 1976: §§ 650–653); and when carved figures extended the entire height of the slab, the text was simply incised across the representation.

Flanking all doors were reliefs of apotropaic mythological winged genii of various types, who stood the full height of the orthostat. Frequently these genii were also associated with representations of the many-branched "tree of life." Directly behind the throne, and opposite doorway e, were identical scenes set in shallow niches and occupying only the upper two-thirds of the slab, which show the king duplicated on either side of such a "sacred tree," with winged male genii to his left and right and the emblem of the god Assur within a winged disc above (see detailed plan, fig. 2: slabs 23 and 13; fig. 3: slab 23). The scenes we would call narrative were disposed in two registers divided by the Standard Inscription, and were installed down the long (north and south) sides of the room. The reliefs of the north wall are

---

(Reade 1965:120). Some Assurnasirpal reliefs were also carried off by Esarhaddon for his "Southwest" palace (Barnett and Falkner 1962), including two lion hunt scenes and several battles. Since the entire north wall of the Throneroom is missing except for slabs 27 and 28, it is not impossible that some of the Southwest Palace battle scenes came from that wall; they may also, however, have been taken from other rooms in the highly eroded west wing.

largely missing; on the south, one begins with bull and lion hunts in the eastern end (figs. 4 and 5) and moves toward the west with a series of battle and tribute scenes interrupted only by door genii and the complex surrounding slab 13 (figs. 6–10).[2] The room terminated in a very broad door at the center of the far west end (plan, fig. 1) that issues into the shallow Room C. On the back wall of that room, opposite the doorway, were set three relief slabs that combine to show a scene most likely of a seated king with cup in hand flanked by attendants and winged male genii (Reade 1965).[3] Because of its placement, this relief, too, effectively participates in the decorative scheme of Room B—situated, in fact, directly opposite the seated king himself, installed on his throne at the eastern end.

In its totality, the throneroom represents a complex play between convention and innovation in the sequence of ancient Mesopotamian art up to that point. One longstanding convention is the architectural form of the throneroom itself. A long, narrow room entered from

----

[2] It should be noted that fallen painted plaster fragments have been observed in the center of the Throneroom (Abu es-Soof 1963:66–68; Mallowan 1966:105; Reade 1979b:19). Some of the decoration is geometric, and since the fragments had impressions of roof beams on the reverse, they therefore came from the ceiling. Other bits, however, include what was identified as parts of human figures and a chariot wheel, and are assumed to have continued the decorative scheme of the reliefs on the wall surfaces above the tops of the reliefs. A color reconstruction of the interior of the Throneroom is presented in Layard (1849a: Pl. II), and while the reliefs depicted are not accurate for the particular corner given, the western end of the Throneroom, their division into two bands and general placement is correct, affording a good view of how they would have been set in place, with painted border and frieze above, reaching to the equally decorated ceiling. Unfortunately, given the poor state of preservation of the actual fragments of painting, it is impossible to reconstruct what role they might have played in the total scheme of the Throneroom. Nevertheless, it may be noted that since the reliefs stood some 2.3 meters high, clearly they were intended to provide the principal visual impact in the room, and so I have proceeded as if they constitute a complete program. (There is also evidence—Gadd 1934:22—that the reliefs themselves may have been selectively painted, as bits of black pigment still adhere occasionally to eyes, shoes, and bits of foliage.)

[3] Although this is a hypothetical reconstruction, there is some evidence for the suggestion. Reade has cited the relief given in Stearns 1961: A-II-a-ii-12, Pl. 36, as the likely male genie at the far right, and the head of the king as possibly A-I-m-3 (see also Stearns 1961:24). Unfortunately, Layard (1849a: Pl. 100, plan III) noted three reliefs on his plan as Room C, slabs 6–8, but illustrated only a single detail of a garment pattern from slab 7 (ibid.: Pl. 39A). Nevertheless, the dimensions of the three slabs given across the wall (± 20 feet across, each slab therefore just under 7 feet) correspond exactly to the three slabs decorating the short, north end of Room G (Brandes 1969; Layard 1849a: Pl. 5). The three slabs from Room G (each 6'7" across) display a scene of the seated king flanked by fan bearers and genii with cone and bucket—figures exactly parallel also to those which flank the king as he stands opposite the "sacred tree" of slab 23 in the Throneroom.

a long side and necessitating therefore a 90-degree turn toward the focal area of the east wall, it is based upon a 2,000-year tradition of bent-axis approaches in Mesopotamian cult rooms, while the particular arrangement of throneroom, anteroom, and large courtyard had been seen as a formal reception suite at Mari in the early second millennium (Moortgat 1969: figs. 4, 21, and 57).

Another feature with a long tradition in Mesopotamia is the heraldic composition of slabs 13 and 23: the doubled king and genii flanking a tree (fig. 3). Antecedents may be found in the cylinder seal repertoire, going all the way back to the Uruk period, ca. 3200 B.C., in particular, with a representation of a bearded male (king?) tendering branches to flanking rams (Moortgat 1969: fig. 1a). The role of the sacred tree as emblem of the provisioning of the land, and the role of the king in relation to it, has been dealt with extensively (Frankfort 1948; Oppenheim 1964). Interesting for our purposes is its mirror, or axial, symmetry. The semantic centrality of the tree is emphasized by its position and should probably be considered comparable to the frontality with which the Virgin or Christ are represented in symmetrical compositions of Christian art (Gombrich 1966; Schapiro 1973; Summers 1979). The king is clearly represented twice, at left and at right; and while the duplication of figures within a single representational unit also has a history in Mesopotamia (see the altar of Tukulti Ninurta I [1244–1208], fig. 11), it is the scale and placement of the motif in relation to its symmetry that is significant here.

Slab 23, set directly behind and above the throne and king, functions essentially as does the tympanum on the facade of a Gothic cathedral, with scenes of the Day of Judgment set above the figure of Christ on the trumeau (Schapiro 1969). As for slab 13, after restoration activities by the Iraqi Department of Antiquities in the Northwest Palace, it was determined that the original plan showing only two entrances at the far ends of the north facade was incorrect and that there had been in addition a monumental central portal in that wall, the opening of which was exactly opposite the placement of the slab on the south wall (Abu es-Soof 1963; Reade 1965; and see plan, figs. 1 and 2). Thus, as one entered by the main entrance from the public Court D, as the general audience would presumably have done, one faced immediately this representation, then turned ninety degrees to face the king, and above him the repetition of the same scene. These two slabs thus become the organizing pivot-points of the Throneroom. That this was clearly intended is apparent not only from the placement of slab 13, interrupting the narrative sequence from slabs 18–17 to 11–3, but

also by the fact that these reliefs neither occupy the full height of the slab, as do the apotropaic doorway genii, nor are they divided into two distracting registers, as are the narrative scenes, but rather are set one-third of the way up the orthostat in their own unique disposition of space, visually apart from the others (Schapiro 1969:229: "The picture field has local properties which affect our sense of the signs").

The fact that the reliefs are executed symmetrically contributes greatly to their organizing capacity. As Moortgat has noted, they "rendered a political and religious idea as a heraldic abstraction, divorced from time and space" (1969:134)—what Akurgal would call a purely conceptual representation (1968:16ff.). More than that, the symmetry and particularly the un-"realistic" repetition of the royal figure and genii serve to lift this most important function of the king—the metaphoric maintenance and sustenance of life through the care of the tree—up to the realm of the "ideal" world that implies the divine (Schapiro 1973:33; Winter 1974:505). And I would submit that this occurs not only on the intellectual, conceptual level of the contents of the representation but also at the physiological/psychological level at which symmetry functions in general, producing an effect of anchoring through the central axis and balance through the flanking figures, which for the ancient Near East pertains to the stability (balance) of the eternal order reflected through the proper exercise of kingship.[4] Precisely what one does not want in this case is directionality and the movement of the eye across (and beyond) the image but, rather, the absorption of the whole at once, as the perceived order of the universe.

Certain elements in the narrative scenes also reflect conventional Mesopotamian usage, in both theme and detail. The hunting of animals

---

[4] This has been the subject of a long series of conversations with Jonathan Silver of Montclair College, New Jersey, and I hope that he will publish his studies on symmetry in the near future. I also had the privilege of discussing symmetry as a physical and physiological phenomenon with Dorothea and Leo Hurwich, of the Department of Psychology at the University of Pennsylvania, following a lecture on symmetry in physics by Robert Schrieffer in the autumn of 1976. I am convinced that it is no accident cultic and mythico-religious scenes are selected for a symmetrical format, precisely because this disposition of figures, by virtue of its constructedness, does take the subjects out of the "real" world. I will not anticipate Jonathan Silver's conclusions about why this is so; but Dorothea Hurwich has noted that, physiologically, the eye seems to scan and process symmetrical images more quickly than asymmetrical ones. The transformation from strict bilateral symmetry to compositional balance achieved through opposed but not identical forms has been discussed by Gombrich (1966:95) and more recently by Summers (1979).

goes back to the lion hunt stele from Warka, ca. 3200 B.C. (Moortgat 1969: fig. 14); that it was not merely an anecdotal or casual theme will be argued below. It is difficult to call these representations (here, the bull and lion hunts of slabs 20 and 19) "historical" narratives, despite the fact that such hunts are mentioned in the king's royal annals (Grayson 1976: § 598). They seem rather to participate in the generic of king-as-vigorous-and-victorious-hunter, the "master-of-animals." Battle scenes, too, had been represented before—for example on the Standard from the Royal Cemetery of Ur, dated to the Early Dynastic Period, ca. 2600 B.C. (see fig. 12). While this may be read as a narrative of sorts, leading from the siege wagons in the lower register to the capture of prisoners in the second, and the presentation of them to a central figure at the top, still it does not provide us with sufficient information to suggest the specificity of time or place required for the truly historical narrative. But, conversely, we cannot insist that every action and gesture in a historical narrative be observed from life; and certainly the stock formulas of bound prisoners or of a fallen enemy beneath the belly of the chariot draft animals that we see on the Assurnasirpal reliefs are quite literal repetitions of the Standard of Ur. The innovative aspects of the Nimrud reliefs lie, therefore, in their intended specificity despite the incorporation of stock images, and in the articulation of the parts, including those conventional units, into a unified sequential composition as opposed to the earlier "serial episodes."[5]

Battle scenes may be broken down into two categories: field campaigns and sieges. The field sequences simply show Assyrian chariotry or cavalry against enemy chariots (slabs 5a–4a, fig. 10), horsemen (slab 27b, fig. 13), or footsoliders (slabs 11a–8a).[6] The direction of

---

[5] The incorporation of conventional units into extended sequences is not unique in the Neo-Assyrian reliefs. It is a significant component of narrative in the visual arts of the Roman period, for example (Hamberg 1945:63, on the column of Trajan), and has been discussed as a device in literature as well (most recently, by White 1979:229). The governing factor must thus be the *intended* realism, whereby the stock motifs are embedded in contexts which also included "real," observed phenomena: here, terrain, foliage, dress, and behavior. It may also be that stock motifs included in such a context function in the narrative by being known and recognizable, thus allowing the viewer/reader to pass over them quickly in order to get to the more important points of narrative focus, an observation I owe to Mark Hall, student in Oriental Studies at the University of Pennsylvania.

[6] A relief showing enemy in chariots, the chariots distinguishable by their 8- as opposed to 6-spoked wheels, that has been found in the Southwest Palace of Esarhaddon (Barnett and Falkner 1962: Pl. CXVII), may also come from the Throneroom.

movement is down the wall from the throne end, and it is here that fallen opponents are depicted beneath the chariot horses. In the siege scenes, the simplest components may be seen in slab 18a (fig. 6), where the king with drawn bow, his shield bearer and attendants, and a siege-tower-cum-battering-ram attack the walls of an enemy citadel being defended by armed bowmen on the ramparts. These basic components can be further elaborated upon, as in slabs 4a–3a (e.g., fig. 10), where Assyrian chariotry pursue enemy chariots, infantry battle in the upper part of the field, and soldiers destroy trees directly outside a citadel also being defended from its walls. In a final case, slabs 5b–3b, the siege itself is depicted in greater detail, with scaling ladders, rams and siege towers, while the king and crown prince flank the city and an empty (presumably royal) chariot waits at the side. In addition, several slabs show mere approaches (e.g., slab 17a, fig. 7, and slabs 11b–8b), particularly across bodies of water, where boats and goatskin floats are used; others deal with aftermaths: the return of king and chariotry to camp, preceded by prisoners and soldiers carrying enemy heads (7a–6a), and the presentation of bound individuals and goods to the king (slabs 18b–17b, figs. 8 and 9, and slabs 8b–5b).[7]

Bodies are shown in various positions, from almost frontal to complete side view, but all heads are rendered in profile. As noted above, the profile view conveys action and involvement of the actors in a space of their own, and is hence most appropriate for the representation of the historic event in its actuality. Furthermore, the king is shown at the same size or only marginally larger than his fellows, and is distinguishable mainly by his royal head dress, fringed and wrapped garment, palanquin-bearer behind, and occasionally also by his pride of place in battle.[8] As a result of this equality in scale—a major signifier in the

---

[7] The obeisance of one ruler to another depicted on slab 18b is not only repeated in later Neo-Assyrian representations (see below), but in fact has a long history in the iconography of the victorious king (Walter 1970:115) as a special vehicle for the expression of political dominance. It is at present impossible to tell whether the Assyrian officials who lead the procession of prisoners represent individuals within the royal entourage and court structure, or Assyrian regional appointees (a point raised by Michelle Marcus, Department of Art History & Archaeology, Columbia University, in a recent paper, and to be pursued further by her).

[8] There is no attempt at individuation of features here (what one would call "portraiture") to represent the king. Moscati (1963:69) has noted that physiognomic identifiability is not unlikely to accompany interest in the historical act, as it provides an added dimension of historicity in the depiction of specific individuals; but the Assyrians never seem to have pursued this.

scenes (Barthes 1977b:46; Schapiro 1969)—the historicity of the action is not diluted by conceptual distortions, and emphasis is on the action unfolding in each sequence. Levels of description move from the total battle sequence to individual components of the scenes to details of action and the surrounding inanimate objects. The king, however, is the principal actor, and the essential formulation is in the transitive: "Assurnasirpal did X." Everything surrounding the basic formula—rivers, trees, side actions, additional actors—constitutes what Barthes would call the "catalyzers" in the narrative as opposed to the primary "cardinal functions" (1977c:93). That is to say, they are functional, insofar as they are correlated with the nuclear elements of the action and add to the discourse, but functionally they are parasitic, and their absence would not alter the story. What they provide is a furthering of the identifiable particularity of each sequence.

This combination of sequence, action, and particularity is precisely what distinguishes the Assurnasirpal reliefs from their predecessors in the ancient Near East. Despite certain gaps in the archaeological record, the earlier monuments we do have are consistent in their differences from the Neo-Assyrian. The Standard of Ur, as we discussed above, consists of a series of episodes following in sequence from the lower register to the upper, but without particularity or syntax. The victory stele of Eannatum of Lagash (ca. 2450 B.C.), sometimes referred to as the Stele of the Vultures (Moortgat 1969: Pls. 118–121), does indeed refer to a specific historic event, the successful military settlement of a border dispute with the neighboring city-state of Umma. This we know from the extensive inscription on both obverse and reverse. The visual component, however, is again either generic or episodic. On the obverse, the god Ningirsu, to whom the victory is attributed, is shown holding a mace and his emblem, the lion-headed eagle, while alongside him is a net full of captured enemy, a representation which could be transferred to any victory monument. On the reverse of the stele is a series of at least four registers, including the king on foot leading a phalanx of spear-bearing warriors who walk upon supine enemies; the king in his chariot, himself armed with a spear; and what seem to be a pile of enemy bodies and an accompanying ritual. Again, although the reverse is extremely fragmentary, it seems that it cannot be read continuously as what we would call "historical narrative," despite the fact that it was clearly meant to be a historical referent.

The same appears to be true of the stele of Naram Sin (ca. 2254–2218 B.C.) of the succeeding Akkad period (fig. 14). Here, the king celebrates

his victory over an Iranian border tribe identified by inscription. He is shown standing triumphantly before a mountain and the bodies of fallen enemy, while his soldiers are aligned below him on ascending diagonals toward the mountain (for the best description of this monument, see Groenewegen-Frankfort 1951:163–165). The inclusion of two trees and contour lines in the landscape add considerably to the sense that a real place/space is being represented, such that some scholars would see this as a fully developed historical monument (e.g., Moscati 1963:30). Yet here again, it is not to be read as a linear progression of action, but rather as a composite, a frozen celebration. In fact, as the king does not draw his bow but merely stands triumphant, there is less "action" than in the preceding stele of Eannatum, despite the extraordinary advance in freedom from registers through the use of the total field. What one would have to say in both of these cases is that while they clearly refer to specific battles and are therefore "historical," the imagery is still emblematic and/or episodic; the stelae are *commemorative* rather than narrative.

In a sense, the function of the free-standing stele determines to some extent the selection of a "culminating scene." The wall is a surface far more conducive to a continuous narrative. Yet, on the one hand, many of the individual slabs of the Throneroom reliefs have self-contained scenes which nevertheless can be read as narrative (see the hunts, slabs 20 and 19, and the battles, 18a and 17a); and on the other hand, not all cultures that employed stone reliefs as wall decoration ever used them narratively.

The use of architectural reliefs seems to have been assimilated into Assyria from the West during the reign of Assurnasirpal (see discussion in Winter, forthcoming), and the use to which the wall is put can best be compared with the more or less contemporary or slightly earlier reliefs of Carchemish, an independent city-state of Hittite/Luwian origins situated on an important crossing of the Euphrates in northern Syria. On the earliest Herald's Wall at Carchemish, series of mythological themes are displayed, one to a slab, all comprised of culminating scenes or simple emblems and with no apparent relation to each other (Orthmann 1971: Pls. 26–28d). On the subsequent Long Wall, soldiers and chariots were clearly arranged in order along adjacent slabs and were possibly meant to convey the idea of a procession behind a row of deities (ibid.: Pls. 24 and 25); but as some of the gods were frontal, and the wife of the donor/ruler is shown seated immediately behind the gods (fig. 15a), it seems rather as if the divine figures were "in array" as opposed to motion, and there are no compelling signs

to suggest that the chariots and soldiers were anything other than emblematic either.

   The chariot slabs from Carchemish (fig. 15b) provide a good contrast to the Assyrian representations, for they have many elements in common, including the shape of the yoke-pole and chariot cab, the shield and spear at the back of the chariot and crossed quivers at the side, and the fallen enemy below the draft horses. However, the archer in the chariot has no object for his knocked arrow, as the enemy is alread fallen and there is no continuation beyond the edge of the slab. There is, in short, no syntax; nor are there any signifying elements to provide specificity of time or place. As we have been trying to establish, one of the requirements for narrative representation is that the units of the narrative find integration, such that ultimately the narrative itself "transcends its contents" (Barthes 1977c:115). This the reliefs of Assurnasirpal achieve even in sequences that are confined to a single slab. On those in which the action extends over three or more slabs, it is even more dramatic: one literally reads the register as one would a line of text.

   On some occasions, there is also a play from top to bottom of the divided registers on the same slab, as, for example, with the hunt scenes (e.g., figs. 4 and 5, slabs 19a and 19b), where the action of the story—the sequence of the slaying of the animal—takes place in the upper register, and the consequence—the ceremonial libation poured over the dead animal—is depicted below. Such a reading could also be applied to the adjacent slabs 18 and 17 (figs. 6–9), where 18a shows the simple attack on a citadel and 18b an individual embracing the feet of the king, and 17a shows swimmers crossing to a citadel in a river and 17b a line of prisoners and goods. While this may be the case, 18b plus 17b can also be read as a continuous sequence of prisoners headed by individuals who are subservient to the king. I personally think this latter reading is the more likely, given the sequence of slabs 8b–5b; however, it is also clear that action is at the top and subsequent response below.

   This relationship applies only to those slabs east of doorway "b" in the south wall, however. For the rest, sequences of approach, conflict, and consequence seem to be distributed over both top and bottom registers. Nevertheless, the general direction of the reading lines is consistent: action generally proceeds down the wall, away from the throne; and in every case the king is shown facing down (i.e., west), as he would be facing when seated on the throne, while the individuals who

approach him on the reliefs come from the western end, as would any
actual audience. The only exception to this is the camp scene, where
the king is shown entering the camp from the west, and here, I would
submit, it is because the king is "returning" to the camp after a battle
and therefore shifts direction to conform to the narrative.[9]

In each of the individual sequences,[10] action proceeds along a basic
horizontal ground line. There is little spatial depth, and no real "back-
ground" to the field (as there is with the reliefs of later Assyrian rulers),
the only exceptions being the water scenes with swimmers, slabs 17a
and 11b–9b, and a scene of Assyrians cutting trees between which is
visible a pattern of scales indicating mountains, that was re-used in the
Southwest Palace at Nimrud and may have come from the Throneroom
(Barnett and Falkner 1962: Pl. CXIV). Occasionally, action also takes
place in the upper part of the register, as headless bodies are indicated
or hand-to-hand combat is depicted (slab 4a, fig. 10); but the figures
seem to float in the air—there is no unified field of action. It is rather
the overlapping of figures on the ground line that becomes a substitute
for spatial depth.

The details which distinguish one scene from another were carefully
added: trees, river, and so on, such that one citadel sits in the midst of
a river (17a); another has four walls (5b–3b); a third is surrounded by
fruit trees (4a–3a). We have mentioned before that these details grant
particularity to each sequence. While they are not sufficient to convey
what we from our post-Renaissance perspective would call realism, the
question is really whether one can get closer to how they might have
been perceived in their own time. Roman Jakobsen, in writing about
realism in art, has noted that there are two conditions which must be
fulfilled: (1) that the author be concerned with displaying verisimilitude
and (2) that the audience or individual judging it perceived it as true
to life (1971:38). In other words, one needs to know the conventions
in order to "see" an image as an ideologue for the object(s) portrayed,

---

[9] See discussion below on whether the organization of simpler narratives (slab 18a),
closer to the throne, and more complex scenes (5b–3b), further down the western end
of the south wall, was the result of conscious planning to increase the intensity of
the scenic development or was simply a question of space and/or differing craftsmen.
It is unfortunate in this regard that the north wall is not intact so that the two might
be compared.

[10] I was pleased to see, after I had cut up photocopies of the slabs and divided
them according to what I thought to be related sequences, that Reade's divisions cor-
responded with mine (see Reade 1979c).

and at that point, recognition becomes instantaneous: one no longer sees a "picture" (ibid.: 39). Our details would then become the devices employed to heighten the perception of realism through the recognition of particularity.

It was with these thoughts in mind that I began to wonder to what degree the individual sequences as they have been isolated might have been recognized and identifiable in antiquity, not only as generally designated regions but as specific places and campaigns.[11] Although the Standard Inscription that is written across the face of each slab includes references to major military campaigns and territorial control assumed during the reign of Assurnasirpal (Grayson 1976: §§ 650–653), it is a very abbreviated text. The most complete inscription preserved is that from the Ninurta Temple at Nimrud (ibid.: §§ 536–591), which includes annalistic accounts of campaigns from the king's first through eighteenth year of reign. It has been assumed that these building inscriptions have been taken from state records or annals, recounting major undertakings by regnal year such as those preserved for later Assyrian kings. In each account recorded in the Ninurta Temple text, the process of a campaign is presented in three stages: the (geographical) approach, the actual conflict or interaction, and the consequences (booty, tribute, imposition of corvée, etc.); that is, just exactly as the sequences are depicted on the reliefs. Furthermore, very precise wording was used to describe each campaign.

When we compare that wording with the reliefs before us, we find surprising correspondences. In relation to slab 17a (fig. 7), for example, only three times are places mentioned not "at" rivers but "in" waters: Anat, an island in the Euphrates near Suḫu (i.e., south; Grayson 1976: § 577); Arwad, on the Phoenician coast of the Mediterranean, described as being an island in the sea (ibid.: § 586); and Carchemish, when the Euphrates was in flood, at which time the Assyrians crossed on floats (ibid.: § 584). Or, for example, with regard to slabs 18b–17b (figs. 8 and 9), although a number of booty and tribute lists are given, including ivory and metal vessels (visible in the upper part of the register), only Carchemish (§ 584) is listed as giving tribute in ivory tusks, as represented, and the account also includes hostages and kings of

---

[11] Olmstead (1918) tried to equate representations on the reliefs with accounts in the texts (see especially p. 247). Perhaps because he tried too hard to squeeze literal readings from the images, his attempt was apparently ignored and never made a place for itself in the scholarly literature.

the region who seize the feet of Assurnasirpal—all carefully noted
in the relief. With regard to slabs 11b–9b, while many river crossings
are noted, the only other time in addition to the mention at Carchem-
ish cited above that refers to floats is at the Middle Euphrates area of
the lands of Suḫu and Laqé (ibid.: § 579), where boats are also men-
tioned as having been built to transport the troops. For the siege of
slab 5b–3b, only twice are towns described as many-walled: the three
walls of Nirbu (Urartu, in the north; ibid.: § 549) and the four walls
of Nairi (also in the north; ibid.: § 569); while both are equally likely
candidates, we have a further reference to a later campaign around
Nirbu, at Mount Kashiari, in which siege towers and battering rams
were used, as in the representations here (ibid.: § 587). This would leave
the only other reference to siege towers, visible also in slab 18a (fig. 6),
to Bit Adini near the Euphrates (ibid.: § 582); and as the territory of
Bit Adini is just before Carchemish on the line of Assyrian march to
the west, this would make the sequence from slabs 18a and 17a most
appropriate, as well as the tribute below, 18b–17b, if associated also
with Carchemish. As for slabs 4a–3a (fig. 10), of the many sieges listed,
the attack against Damdammusa on the northern Tigris in year 18
(ibid.: § 587) is the only instance in which specific mention is made of
cutting down orchards, as well noting the piles of heads made following
the massacre, and both the trees and decapitated bodies are carefully
represented in the reliefs. Finally, for the two historical narrative slabs
preserved on the north wall (28 and 27, fig. 13), Barnett (1967) has
suggested that these figures are Iranian, on the basis of the mounted
archers, which may be corroborated by the helmet types and equestrian
ornaments related to objects actually found in northwest Iran (Winter
1980). In addition, it is in the east (at Mount Nisir, at the Babitu Pass
in the Zagros; ibid.: § 556) that Assurnasirpal describes encounters with
warriors on horseback along side mountain torrents, here depicted as
running water.

   It would seem, therefore, that we are indeed dealing with very spe-
cific references in the reliefs, once they are read in conjunction with
descriptions in the text. The designations given as part of figure 2
present the various optimum choices for location, based upon verbal
descriptions for each sequence. These equations are made with great
caution, since a situation occurs later, in the reign of Sennacherib, in
which one of the major visual representations of his Syrian campaign
of 701—the well-known siege of Lachish in Judah—is clearly identified
by label on the relief, but in the annalistic account of the campaign the
site is not even mentioned (Luckenbill 1927: §§ 311–312).

This does not preclude the possibility of exact parallels in the reign of Assurnasirpal, however, and I am further encouraged to make these equations by accounts of the as-yet-unpublished embossed bronze door-bands of Assurnasirpal from the Temple of Mamu at Imgur Enlil (modern Balawat), which are reported to show scenes specifically labeled as Suḫu, Bit Adini, Carchemish, Urartu (i.e., Nirbu), and the cities of the Phoenician coast (Barnett 1973:21). It will be interesting to compare these scenes with the Throneroom reliefs when they are finally published.[12] Until that time, I would suggest that there seems to be a close correlation between the wording of the Annals and depictions on the reliefs—a high degree of parallelism therefore between text and image, if not the likelihood of exact correspondences.

The Program

Having established the content of the wall scenes, it is possible to proceed to an investigation of their integration into the Throneroom as a whole and to explore the intention behind the decorative scheme. That the Neo-Assyrian palaces were clearly intended to impress is

---

[12] This is especially necessary as, in a recent lecture on the unpublished Assurnasirpal gates found by Mallowan and David Oates (Joan Oates, "Balawat: Recent Excavations and a New Gate," presented at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Feb. 23, 1981), bands were illustrated that seem to be identifiable as Suhi on the Middle Euphrates and included booty of ivory tusks—thus increasing the likely candidates for the sequence on slabs 18b–17b, for example. An intermediate step in verifying the present correlations might be to compare those scenes with labels from the bronze bands of Assurnasirpal's son, Shalmaneser III, also from Balawat (on which, see below). In a cursory survey, it would certainly seem that there is a good deal of correspondence: e.g., the strip indicating tribute from Sangara, king of Carchemish (King 1915: Pl. XXXIV), shows the king with simple hair-fillet, garment with fringe at bottom, and one arm raised, indeed identical to the leading figure in the procession of slabs 18b–17b, which I have tentatively suggested to be Carchemish, the unpublished Assurnasirpal gates notwithstanding. In addition, the campaign set in Urartu on the Shalmaneser gates (King 1915: Pls. VII–IX), with chariotry pitted against fleeing and fallen enemy in a plain, is likewise parallel to scenes independently called Urartu here (slabs 11a–8a). Of course, this verification is not possible in all cases, as the two kings did not always campaign in the same place, but where there is correspondence, the comparisons might prove extremely useful. As for the accuracy and reliability of the details, much has been written on the presence of artists in the field with the army on military campaigns and exploratory expeditions, and the way in which Neo-Assyrian artists were able to render particular details about foreign regions, presumably through actual observation and the keeping of field sketches (see, most recently, Reade 1979b:23–26). It is to be assumed, therefore, that topographical features recorded in the reliefs did actually reflect the specific terrain, just as verbal descriptions did.

stated most explicitly: by Assurnasirpal, who decorated his "in splendid fashion" (Grayson 1976: § 653); and by Sennacherib, who intended his to be the "astonishment of all nations" (Luckenbill 1927: § 413). And that there would also have been a program in mind seems likely, given the nature of the building and the public function of the room in question, just as palaces, reception suites, and thronerooms have been important vehicles for decorative schemes relating to notions of the state and the ruler in a variety of subsequent cultures and periods (see Root 1979; Nylander 1979; Davis-Weyer 1971:84–88; Schlosser 1891:58–64; Walter 1970; Rosenberg 1979; MacDougall, forthcoming; Biddle 1963; Partridge 1978; Gorse 1980).

Before proceeding, however, it is important to look at the impressive north facade of the Throneroom that gives onto the large outer Court D/E. The importance of this facade is linked to the significance of the courtyard into which it faces, and the other sides off of which were most likely distributed the public offices associated with the functioning of the palace administration. Oppenheim (1964:328) recognized this court to be virtually as important as the Throneroom itself, with the monumental towered facade similar to those which stood at the entrances to temple cult rooms.

The reliefs and colossi associated with this facade have been enumerated by Reade (1965:131) and are the subject of a recent article by Meuszyński (1979). Along with the standard genii that mark the doorways, a number of fragments were preserved which represent figures in procession. They stand the full height of the slabs, with the Standard Inscription carved across their bodies. Some of the figures are clearly foreigners—wearing turbanlike caps and wrapped garments, and carrying goods such as a tray of bracelets, earrings, and pectorals (Mallowan 1966: fig. 47; Meuszyński 1979: figs. 1–3), or accompanied by exotic creatures such as a pair of long-tailed monkeys (Barnett 1975:7; here, fig. 16). Other figures on reliefs found in the Southwest Palace but almost surely re-used from this context, for which only drawings now exist, wear pointed caps and open overgarments with scalloped borders and carry small vases or buckets (Barnett and Falkner 1962: Pl. CXXIV).

There seem originally to have been anywhere from two to four figures to a slab; fragments of at least eight individuals are preserved. In addition, several Assyrians are also depicted—both bearded and clean-shaven, wearing pectoral ornaments, carrying staffs of office, and shown with hands clasped rather than with the subservient clenched

and raised fists of the foreigners (Mallowan 1966: figs. 45, 46, and 49; Meuszyński 1979: figs. 4 and 5). Apparently also in Layard's original drawings of Court D, a figure of the king receiving the procession had been preserved (Mallowan 1953:28).

The garments worn by the foreigners all correspond to standard dress for individuals from the West when compared with later, labeled figures—in particular, from Bit Adini, Carchemish, and Phoenicia (Wäfler 1975). This is especially noteworthy, because it is precisely these areas which provide the most elaborate tribute to Assurnasirpal, including gold bracelets and necklaces from Bit Adini and Carchemish (Grayson 1976: § 584), bronze pails from Carchemish (ibid.), and two female apes, large and small, from the Phoenician coast (ibid.: § 586).

Once again, then, we seem to have a literal representation of what is also preserved in the Annals. Assurnasirpal further tells us in the Standard Inscription (Grayson 1976: § 653) that he filled the palace with gold, silver, and other valuables from the lands over which he had gained dominion—the same goods he seems to be representing. Like the battle scenes in which the Assyrians always win, there is no intimation of exchange or that the king gives anything in return. All wealth comes to him (see Mauss 1967 ed., in regard to less hierarchical societies in which articulated patterns of exchange are what maintain social relations and the state); thus the king's unique position is underscored, his ability to elicit tribute serving as a validation of power. The outer facade of the Throneroom, therefore, sets the stage most appropriately for the actual reception and presence within.

How then was the desired effect achieved inside? First of all, through scale: the scale of the physical space itself—Court and Throneroom; and the scale of the decoration—reliefs standing well over the average height of a man, doorway colossi towering over these, and paintings up to the ceiling. Second, in the emphasis on doorways in general: that is, the significantly marked "passages" into and out of the space, passing the mythological beings of the genii and the composite creatures of the colossi who fully confronted an approaching individual, both announcing and controlling the liminality of the threshold (Turner 1974:237). Further, as Rio has pointed out (1976:507), images such as monsters and genii, which belong only to an invented universe, predispose the viewer much more strongly to highly charged space. The frequent repetition of the sacred tree further enhances this "specialness"—belonging to an abstract realm of ideal intentions. The repetition of the tree at each corner is particularly significant, as the central axis of the tree is

the corner and the image bends around the corner to right and left (see fig. 2). By this simple device, we are not presented with four separate-though-adjacent wall surfaces, but rather with a unified and continuous space inside the walls—i.e., the room.

The role played by slabs 13 and 23 (which feature the tree in context, as central to the desired universal order) was discussed above. They orient the viewer to the main focus of the room. From there, the disposition of the other slabs also becomes important. At least on the preserved south wall, the narrative reliefs proceed down from the king, who would have faced west on his throne, as indeed he does in the reliefs. All events thereby emanate from him and his reign, as, conversely, the individual approaching the throne goes counter to the direction of the reliefs, confronting the events as he passes.

In the narratives, as we have seen, a high degree of selection is operative. It is surely no accident that although numerous animals are hunted by the king according to his Annals (lions, bulls, ostrich, elephants; see Grayson 1976: § 681), only lions and bulls are represented as appropriate opponents here. The significance of this selection is underscored by the fact that the royal seal of the ninth-century Assyrian kings showed them also in combat with a lion (Sachs 1953). Details in the historical narratives are also carefully selected and clearly represented to allow for easy recognition, with certain distortions and simplifications occurring to focus attention and thereby facilitate recognition.[13] In this context, the work of Barthes on the advertising image is not a casual referent, for there, as here, certain "signifieds" must be put across, and so long as transmission of the "message" is paramount, these signifieds have to be communicated as clearly as possible and thus are framed with a view to optimum reading (Barthes 1977b:33).

Hence, despite the changes in scene or specific action in the individual sequences, all the historical narratives have the identical grammatical structure. All are articulated in simple declarative sentences, with the firm implication of objectivity (never is an emotional component introduced to heighten the drama by qualifying the triumph of victory with the tragedy of defeat, as, for example, in the mosaic of the battle between Alexander and Darius from the House of the Faun at

---

[13] See Jakobsen 1971:44 with regard to Dostoevsky, and how, in order to really show an object, it must be "tinted"—i.e., it is necessary to deform the shape it generally has, to call attention, so that the object may be picked up with appropriate focus.

Pompeii; see Gombrich 1960:136–137). The "subject" is always clearly defined, and it is always the same: the king.

Variation therefore occurs in the predicate. But while the visual emphasis may be on the actions, together they illustrate the character of the subject, and so, in effect, the topic never shifts from the king (Todorov 1977:66–67). The order of events as represented may even be said to follow the word order of unmarked Semitic Akkadian: subject-object-verb (Givon 1976). The king, with or without attendants, appears at one side, usually the left (hence the subject). The object of his attentions and/or actions follows. And only at the end of the sequence is the verb perceivable: in battles, for example, he *conquers*; this is clear after the array of casualties, falling men, and so on, because what you see (king shooting bow) may be the immediate action, but the *governing* action is apparent only in the totality.

The "person" of the subject is more complex than it might seem. We have discussed above the tendency to read profile views in narrative in the third person: "He (Assurnasirpal) did X." However, the king as principal actor whose presence is invoked in his very Throneroom, where he sits upon the throne, and would be present by association even with the empty throne, also adds a dimension of "I (Assurnasirpal) did X." The play is ambiguous, therefore, between the third person and the first person singular, between the fact of the thing/event and his assertion of it.

It is in this context that we understand better the function of the historical narratives of the Throneroom. In combination with the other reliefs, they give substance to the structural tension between the "ideal" cultic and mythological world and the purportedly "real" world: Yet, it is precisely, as we have shown above, in the selection of scenes that constantly show the invincibility of the Assyrians that the "real" world has been much manipulated. The reliefs, therefore, further mediate between history and the king's "assertion-of-history." Because the scenes appear so real—even to appropriate landscape elements and dress—the denoted images function to naturalize the underlying rhetoric; the very realness "innocents the semantic artifice of connotation," allowing the message to be bought without defensive armor, since the message is seemingly founded in nature (Barthes 1977b:45–46). The traditional structuralist dichotomy between nature and culture (Lévi-Strauss 1973, 1975) seems both recognized and artfully exploited in the cultural use of nature; for the cultural message—the royal rhetoric—is the power of the king and of the state, as demonstrated in the historical event.

Power is clearly what is conveyed in the inscriptions as well, and it must be remembered that the carving of the Standard Inscription over each slab cannot be seen as accidental or arbitrary. The Standard Inscription is a highly condensed formulation of the titles and activities of the king, including the king's name and ancestry, royal epithets expressing piety, valor, and military strength, enumeration of early campaigns, a summary of territorial expansion in general terms, and reference to the establishment of the capital at Nimrud and the building of the palace (de Filippi 1977:127).

The same ambiguities in grammatical subject discussed just above also occur in the text, where attributes in the titulary are presented in the third person, actions in the first. The activities mentioned in the Standard Inscription are clearly abstracted from the Annals, as is the far more extensive account preserved in the Ninurta Temple inscription which has been used above to identify the individual historical narratives in the Throneroom. But I would suggest that, rather than seeing the text—Annals or Standard Inscription—*behind* the images, they should be seen as separate but parallel systems, particularly as we are here concerned with an essentially nonliterate population.

As the Throneroom reliefs may thus be seen as a very explicit and extensive rendering of the same concepts and events recorded in the Annals and expressed in the Standard Inscription, so the greatly abbreviated decorative scheme of the rest of the palace—repeated human- and eagle-headed genii flanking the sacred tree as well as occasional representations of the standing or seated king (Stearns 1961; Reade 1965; Brandes 1969)—should be seen as the résumé of the essence of the Standard Inscription: the articulation of the right order of the universe. That this is so is supported by the pride of place given to slabs 13 and 23, the full statement of the maintenance of the divine order by genii with lustral cone and bucket and through the person of the king. Thus when Reade says that the documents and the sculptures are inseparable (1979a:329), I would agree; but when he further adds, "like print and picture in an illustrated book," I must diverge, for this is more like a book in which there are only pictures, telling the same story as a book in which there are only words.

One may question the standardization, both in the inscription and in the repetitive decoration of most of the palace (see Paley 1976); however, this can perhaps best be understood in terms of modern communication theory, and the fact that the more standardized the message, the more reduced the cost per message event in emission and energy

expended in decoding (Wobst 1977:323). This is further understood as necessary when we remember that we are here at the beginning of the incorporation of historical narrative into architectural decoration, and redundancy, necessary at all times to ensure reception, is particularly important as new modes of expression take time to be processed and become familiar to an audience. As the genre develops within the course of the Neo-Assyrian period, we shall see that it increases in acceptable variation; before proceeding to an investigation of later representations, however, it might be well to draw in the threads spun out thus far.

The appearance of historical narrative in works of art of the ancient Near East is correlated with the establishment by Assurnasirpal of a new capital at Nimrud/Kalḫu, after 1,000 years of residence by Assyrian kings at Assur.[14] It is further correlated with the expansionist activities that made Assyria a territorial empire. The decorative scheme of Assurnasirpal's Northwest Palace as we have laid it out may therefore be seen as a response to the imperial situation and to imperial needs.

A similar moment of fluorit of the historical narrative occurs later, in the Roman Empire, coinciding precisely with the mounting of extensive foreign campaigns (Hamberg 1945; Hannestad 1979), and had occurred earlier, in Egypt during the New Kingdom. In particular, the battle scenes of Ramses II (1279–1212 B.C.) of Dynasty XIX at Qadesh have led some scholars to see Egypt as the likely source for Assurnasirpal's innovations (Breasted 1932; Moscati 1963:99). I would say rather that the similar desires to represent events as reality all spring from very similar imperialistic concerns, as Ramses II was as much involved with validating his Empire in Syria as was Assurnasirpal. In Egypt, this marked a significant change from the more traditional means of

---

[14] The establishment of a "new capital" is an important phenomenon in the Neo-Assyrian period, from Assurnasirpal at Nimrud to Sargon's installation at Khorsabad, to Sennacherib at Nineveh. The phenomenon in general terms has been discussed by Blanton (1976: esp. 257–258) with regard to the maintenance of neutral political capitals in complex high-order commercial systems. In the particular case before us, Liverani (1979:309) speaks of the foundation of a new capital as the ultimate creative act of the king as founder/hero, whose work thus becomes like the basic creative act of the gods. The two perspectives are not mutually exclusive; the complexity of the system in the first instance may be what can allow the statement of the king to take this particular form in the second. In any event, it is the initial act of Assurnasirpal that is the most significant, because previously the capital city, Assur, had been precisely the name-city and center of the chief god Assur, the people of the state the people "of Assur," a nomenclature significantly different from Mesopotamia in the south. The shift to Nimrud therefore broke the old focus around the god of the city-state and reflects a new imperial movement. Subsequent kings simply continued the pattern.

representing victory in battle by the icon of a king smiting an enemy, an emblem of supremacy sometimes complemented by inscription or specificity of garb and hairstyle but never incorporating real time and space. The appearance of true historical narrative in Egypt was a short-lived phenomenon which, on the basis of what we know of the realpolitik of the period, seems to have been largely rhetorical and for purposes of display. In Assyria some 400 years later, the historical narratives appear to reflect the actual political situation, as Assyrian expansion is attested from many corroborating sources and continues on through the next two centuries.

I have suggested above that the historical narratives reflect actual campaigns, as recorded in the royal annals. In addition, if one looks at the disposition of the identified campaigns on the south wall, one notes that they are all situated in the southwest, west, or north (Suḫu and Laqé, Carchemish, Bit Adini and the Ḫabur River, Nirbu/Urartu and Damdammusa), while the only certain sequence from the north wall seems to represent an event in the east. This is especially striking, for, in both the Ninurta Temple inscription and the Standard Inscription, in the phrases in which Assurnasirpal expounds upon his territorial control, he groups the southwest, west, and north into one sequence, and the east, southeast, and south in the next. While we do not have enough evidence from the north wall to sustain a strong argument, it is tempting to see this same division as part of the conscious program of the Throneroom, much on the same lines as the exterior of a Gothic cathedral often allocated Old Testament scenes to the north (cold) side and New Testament to the south, and as interior fresco cycles from Byzantium to the Renaissance were also frequently organized around similar polarities (Davis-Weyer 1971:84–85; Ettlinger 1965).

This division of elements bound together by their opposition into a whole that comprises and integrates extremes is thus a not uncommon device, used to imply the whole that lies within the extremities at the same time as the multiplicity of individual examples suggests the totality of places conquered. The opposition between east and west can be found clearly expressed in Neo-Assyrian texts of the period as a chosen metaphor for the extent of the Empire—for example, in an inscription of Shamshi-Adad V (823–811 B.C.), which announces the extent of Assyrian power from Nairi in the east to opposite Carchemish in the west (Luckenbill 1926: § 716), and in Assurnasirpal's *own* words, that he has "brought under one authority ferocious (and) merciless kings *from east to west*" (Grayson 1976: § 652; emphasis mine). Such textual

references serve to strengthen the likelihood that this opposition would be articulated visually as well, and there is evidence from subsequent reigns to support such a reading. In text, mountain and water zones are invoked as border areas *par excellence*, in order to evoke both the spatial diversity of the land governed by Assyria and the frontiers which thus stood in contrast to the "center" (Liverani 1979:306–307).[15] Pictorially, the very throne base of Sargon II shows a campaign taking place in mountain country on one side (east?), riverine territory on the other (the Euphrates, west? fig. 17); while in the palace of Sennacherib at Nineveh, we see the unusual incorporation of two separate campaigns in a single room, juxtaposing Phoenicians of the seacoast and opponents from a mountainous region (Loud 1936:65 and figs. 79–80; Paterson 1915: Pls. 7–11). In all other cases of the palace of Sennacherib, there is but a single campaign depicted in each room, and it would seem that the standard organization is not followed here precisely because the room in question, designated Room I, was originally the main Throneroom of Sennacherib, its monumental facade facing Court H virtually identical to that of Assurnasirpal's Court D (see plan, fig. 18; also Turner 1970:183; Reade 1980b:76). Here, too, the individual entering would be presented with a visual parenthesis of the extent of the Empire, just as has been suggested for the Throneroom of Assurnasirpal.

In a sense, then, the parenthesis serves not only to delineate the borders, but also to mark the center (see Geertz 1977; Liverani 1979). Throne base or Throneroom, therefore, becomes the symbolic "true center," encapsulating the Empire itself, a microcosm of the state.

It should be emphasized that no stress on the secular in the art of either Assurnasirpal or succeeding kings is intended (*contra* Groenewegen-Frankfort 1951:171; and with Speiser 1955:66–67). The representation of the god Assur in the winged disc may occupy less space on the reliefs than did the god Ningirsu on the stele of Eannatum, but the texts put victory into the hands of the god, just as they had done in the Early Dynastic period (Grayson 1976: §§ 543 and 651), and this is expressed visually by the presence of the god, not only above the sacred tree of slabs 13 and 23 but also above the chariot of the king in battle,

---

[15] Gorse (1980) cited a similar usage in the sixteenth-century Villa Doria in Genoa, where the heroic deeds of Andrea Doria are alluded to through opposed frescoes showing mythological battles on land and sea as metaphors for dynastic victory. It is also likely that Doria himself served as the model for both Neptune and Zeus in the two battles.

shooting bow and arrow as the king shoots, standing when he stands, gesturing as he gestures (see slabs 3a, 9b, 5a, 11a). Although we in the West have been acculturated since the Renaissance to give precedence to foreground and scale, in the vertical organization of priorities of Mesopotamian art, the position of the god Assur identifies him as the governing principle of the action—as he is so represented in the Standard Inscription. Whether this is to be viewed as an expression of belief or as the metaphor by which the king expresses his legitimacy and which enables him to exercise his franchise to rule (Liverani 1979:301), the god is clearly a central feature of the system, and it is under his aegis that the king functions.

The whole Throneroom can then be read as a statement of the establishment and maintenance of the exterior state through military conquest and tribute, and the maintenance of the internal state through cultic observances, achieved through the person of the all-powerful king.

These attitudes are also found in the texts, where the titles employed by Assurnasirpal show similar concerns. I would even go further and suggest that, just as we have posited exact correspondences between verbally and visually described events in the historical narratives, there is an equal correspondence between the epithets assumed by the king and his various categories of representation. Thus, the titulary that closes the annalic recounting of the king's activities in the Standard Inscription (as well as in the Ninurta Temple inscription) begins:

> (I,) Assurnasirpal, attentive prince, worshipper of the great gods, ferocious predator, conqueror of cities and the entire highlands…[Grayson 1976: §§ 652 and 539]

I would see in this sequence the same four roles in which we see Assurnasirpal in the Throneroom: A. himself seated on the throne (and most likely depicted as such on the far west wall of Room C, exactly opposite); A. as the maintainer of divine order through the care of the sacred tree; A. as vanquisher of wild bulls and lions; and A. as warrior.[16]

---

[16] The Akkadian word *ušumgallu*, which I translate as "predator," is a complicated term. It is a Sumerian loan word, often rendered as "dragon" (e.g., Grayson op. cit., Paley 1976), but I feel this equation must be questioned. In my pursuit of this word, I am grateful to Professor Åke Sjöberg, Babylonian Section of the University Museum, University of Pennsylvania, for his aid in going through the Sumerian dictionary files; and to Professor Thorkild Jacobsen of Harvard University for his comments. This is not the place to cite all specific references. However, there are a few instances in which Sumerian UŠUM.GAL is preceded by the determinative for snake, hence "dragon"; but

This multidimensional definition of kingship, which straddles the secular and the divine, is again well known in the ideology and artistic representations of subsequent periods (e.g., Root 1979; Corrigan 1978; Mango 1972:108–110; A. Grabar 1936). More important, however, the articulation of divine favor and the role of the king, including civic, priestly, and military functions, can be traced back in time to the Old Assyrian period in the early second millennium B.C. (Larsen 1974:296). There is thus a clearly established tradition in Mesopotamia upon which the Neo-Assyrian king stands. What is distinctive here is the manner in which these aspects were displayed visually (and verbally) in the palace.

In fact, I would even suggest that both words and pictures adhere to the identical structural principles. In the extended titulary at the beginning of the Standard Inscription, immediately after the king's genealogy (Grayson 1976: § 650), a series of characteristics are ascribed to the king that, I submit, follow closely the organization of the Throneroom reliefs.

The governing principle is that the king's achievements are granted through divine sanction, brought about through his piety. From there, a string of epithets follows, all equally weighted; but it is striking that the first, "fearless in battle," is given in an active, attributive mode, while those epithets that follow are rather consequences: the subjugation of the unsubmissive, enemies being trampled, and so on. Inserted in the middle is a recapitulation of divine sanction, then a second active image is evoked: the king who "captured lands," from which again the consequences are enumerated—receipt of tribute, taking of hostages. In the first series, the quality of "fearless" governs the consequences that follow, and the fact of having captured lands governs the second. In the total string of descriptive phrases enumerating the king's attributes and achievements, one can virtually see corresponding relief scenes:

---

in the vast majority of citations it is given merely as a creature or being searching for prey, or as an epithet for a god (e.g., Enki, god of the earth/sweet waters, who is *never* a dragon). Jacobsen would therefore prefer to translate the term literally as the "great (GAL) unique one," having several applications. It is especially significant that the noun *ušumgallu* in the Standard Inscription is followed by the adjective *ekdu*, "ferocious." This word, according to the Chicago Assyrian Dictionary, 1958:62–63, occurs basically in Neo-Assyrian texts and, outside of the Assurnasirpal usage, is applied only to wild bulls and lions. This fact greatly strengthens, I feel, the suggestion that the epithet for Assurnasirpal is to be directly equated with his appearance on the reliefs as the vanquisher of bulls and lions, a predator equal to the combat with his ferocious opponents. That the correlation of precisely four attributes and types of reliefs may reflect a structurally significant number in the Neo-Assyrian universe, parallel to the title "King of the Four Quarters" and to quadripartite divisions of the army and the administrative hierarchy of the royal palace (see Garelli 1974:140), must be pursued in another context.

organization around the piety of slabs 13 and 23, then individual
historical narratives such as subject kings kissing Assurnasirpal's feet,
enemy trampled beneath the chariot horses, cities conquered, tribute
exacted, prisoners received. Perhaps even more significant, however, we
are also presented with the same expression of resolution from action
to consequence as is seen in the reliefs: for example, in the hunt slabs,
where action is above and the consequent ritual below, and in the
sequence from battles to aftermath.[17]

Correspondences in both content and structure are therefore to
be found in the texts and the imagery: first, the similar organization
around a governing principle of divine sanction once the king himself is
introduced; second, a similar syntax of action and explicit articulation of
action to consequence; third, the same grammatical and compositional
play on the ambiguity between the subject of the action/the king in the
first and third persons; fourth, a correlation of campaigns enumerated
to campaigns depicted; and fifth, the same four major facets of royal
identity, which in the reliefs take the form of four different types of
scenes in the Throneroom.[18]

In this parallelism, which I feel is demonstrable between text and
image, we are clearly in the presence of compelling royal rhetoric: two
powerful and reinforcing statements, linguistic and visual, that both

---

[17] The only thing that is missing in the verbal account is the "approach" scene. It
may be accounted for in the annalistic portion of the Standard Inscription; however,
in terms of references to the "difficult road," the king was able to successfully lead his
troops over (see Liverani 1979, and his analysis of these references as metaphors for
the king's ability to lead in general).

[18] That such a relationship between the structure of verbal and visual compositions
of a single culture should be demonstrable is not surprising, although it has been
little explored in ancient art. Roman Jakobsen (1970) has done a study of the special
isomorphic relationship between poetry and painting in three cases—England, France,
and Germany—which would suggest the need for similar analyses of Sumerian and
Akkadian literary compositions. Another aspect of the relationship between literary
compositions and visual arts of our period was suggested some 20 years ago by Oppen-
heim (1960), when he discussed Sargon II's "Letter to the god Assur," that described
the details of his eighth campaign against the territory of Musasir in the northwest. In
that text, as in the reliefs, very specific details of the traversed landscape, battles, booty,
etc., were described; all ultimately aimed at "illustrating the central figure of the king"
(ibid.:134). What is most compelling in this text is that the "letter" (and presumably
the whole category of Assyrian "letters to the gods") was clearly intended not to be
quietly deposited in the temple, but rather to be *read in public* (ibid.:143); thus, narrative
text and relief both also share aspects of public audience reception.

Finally, although I suggest this with great hesitancy, I wonder if not only individual
epithets and basic principles, but also intrinsic structure and organization of the
whole may not be identical in the Standard Inscription and decorative program of the
Throneroom. I would draw the diagram as follows:

carry the same message. That it was a program consciously applied is strongly indicated, not only by the coherence of the scheme, but also by evidence that in the *temples* built by Assurnasirpal at Nimrud a very different sort of decoration was executed in relief—heraldic and mythological representations of divine combats as opposed to images of the king and historical narratives (Meusczyński 1976). This is not, however, the "biography" of an individual or his personal propaganda (Reade 1979a:331) but rather the ideology of the state. If, with Culler, we see ideology as "a theory which justifies particular economic, political and intellectual practices by concealing their historical origins and making them the *natural* components of an interpreted world" (1973:471; emphasis mine), then we see immediately the logical investment of Assurnasirpal not only in the specific use of what appear to be purely denotative "historical narratives" but also in the overriding program of the Throneroom as a whole.

The impact of the Throneroom was charged with the tension established between apparently opposing elements. In slab 23, the tree is central and the king serves it on each side, yet it is placed directly behind the throne in a position such that the king himself, when present, would also be central. The symmetrical reliefs are played against the asymmetrical historical representations. The text of the Standard Inscription is posed against the images. And the subject of both, while

Throneroom	Text
1—King himself on throne	(I am) Assurnasirpal
2—Slab 23: King flanking tree and Assur in winged disc	Vice-regent of Assur, beloved of the gods
3—Hunts and Battles (generic attributes; action: consequence)	Titulary I: attributes (action: consequences)
4—Individual battle sequences	Annalistic account of specific campaigns
5—King seated on throne (Room C reliefs visible)	Titulary II: more attributes (including "praiseworthy king")
6—Throneroom as a whole, plus Court D facade of tribute, as center of the palace (and of the Empire)	Description of building of palace, plus tribute, as center of the Empire

NOTE: I do not include the anteroom, Room F, to the south of the Throneroom in this scheme; however, with its repetitive representations of genii, king, and sacred tree, one might say that it functioned, as did the rest of the palace, as a résumé of the essence of order made explicit in the Throneroom.

always the king, alternates between the first and third person singular. It is the power of the Throneroom that, withall, these oppositions are bound into a tight whole, strengthened through the binary play (Lévi-Strauss 1974:196) into a definition of the cultural function of the presiding individual and the space.

The production of art on this scale and in this sort of context has definite advantages. Once the initial expenditure in time, money, and conception has been made, the message contained in the program continues to be beamed with great longevity and little or no further maintenance cost (Wobst 1977:322). That this message was deemed important by Assurnasirpal himself is reflected in his concern about the care of the palace after his own lifetime (Grayson 1976: § 620), as well as by his obvious pride in its initial achievement.

As for the nature of the message, it is a very fine line between the statement of an ideology as a monument to an existing or wished-for status quo and the beaming of that ideology as propaganda, designed to manipulate social forces. I doubt very much if the two can be effectively separated, for in the very statement lies the implication of reinforce-ment—with exactly the same duality of the term, having connotations both military and social, as in modern usage. I feel we must therefore assume that the representations were aimed not only at the education by example and the manipulation of foreign visitors but also at the shaping and maintenance of the local population—those individuals who must buy the royal message if the state is to remain stable and the king securely in power (see Liverani 1979:298–299).[19] In the end, what is before us in the Throneroom of Assurnasirpal II is therefore an integrated architectural, pictorial, and textual representation of the institution of kingship and the ideal of the Neo-Assyrian state.

---

[19] I am indebted in this discussion to conversations with Elizabeth Meyers, Ph.D. candidate at the University of Pennsylvania, who by pressing for a distinction between "rhetoric" and "propaganda," helped me to clarify the fuzzy area of overlap between the two, best understood if governed by "ideology," and the multiple levels of intention that can be simultaneously operative in the statements of that ideology. John Russell, also a Ph.D. student at the University of Pennsylvania, will pursue the relationship of meaning to audience in his dissertation, and has initially distinguished much more concisely than I the several components of that audience. In the present case, it is impossible to establish further the extent to which the gods may have been considered an "audience" for the reliefs, however, as the parallelism of text and image would clearly not have been expected to be perceptible to a predominantly nonliterate populace or foreign visitors.

Historical Development and Cultural Perspective

The Monuments

Many of the issues raised with regard to the Throneroom of Assurnasirpal become clearer when we see the form they took and how they developed over the course of the Neo-Assyrian period. In this, much is owed to the recent work of Julian Reade, who has charted the development of narrative composition in Assyrian sculpture (1979c). But it might be well to put this material together briefly from the particular perspective of the present discussion.

The art produced in the reign of Shalmaneser III (858–824 B.C.) seems heavily dependent upon that of his father, Assurnasirpal. Small fragments of wall paintings from the Throneroom of Fort Shalmaneser at Nimrud (as yet unpublished, but described in Oates 1963:28) indicate that the room was decorated with a procession of figures from the royal bodyguard and probably therefore included also the king himself, possibly receiving tribute. Other unpublished fragments from the building include standing genii and traces of a sacred tree (ibid.:30). The glazed brick panel, also from the Fort, shows the king duplicated right and left, with Assur in a winged disc directly above him, and above that, divided by a cuneiform inscription giving the name of the king, his father, and grandfather, stand two rampant opposed bulls and a sacred tree (Reade 1963). All of these, despite minor variations, have strong parallels in the Northwest Palace. In addition, the Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser, with its carved registers on four sides (fig. 19a & b), owes a great deal to the sequences of the Throneroom reliefs of Assurnasirpal showing booty and tribute, as does the carved throne base of Shalmaneser from the Fort (Layard 1849a: Pls. 53–56; Oates 1963; Hulin 1963). Both monuments may also be compared to the tributary figures of Assurnasirpal's Court D, where, in particular, figures with trays of bracelets and earrings and others with apes seem virtually copied from the sculptured facade (fig. 16). One group of tributaries from the throne base is actually labeled as coming from Bit Adini, further strengthening the identification for Assurnasirpal's procession suggested above. And finally, once it was discovered that two sets of bronze door bands belonging to Assurnasirpal had been preserved from Balawat/Imgur Enlil (Barnett 1973), the bronze bands of Shalmaneser III could no longer be discussed in terms of innovation in design (King 1915). Nevertheless, some trends observable in the Shalmaneser Gates from Balawat are worth remarking upon. The order in which

the bands should be read has been discussed by various scholars (most recently, Reade 1979c). The eight pairs of double-register bands seem to show a definite expansion in the amount of space and information given in the earlier bands. The bull and lion hunts of the Assurnasirpal bands, closely related to those depicted on his Throneroom reliefs, are entirely omitted in the bands of his son, and only military and campaign activities are included—what we have called the "historical narratives." The Shalmaneser gates also go further in including landscape elements to mark the terrain and site of each campaign (King 1915: Pls. III, XIII, XXX, etc.; here, e.g., fig. 20). Therefore, just on the basis of this one king, successor to Assurnasirpal, we may tentatively predict a general trend of elaboration in the genre of historical narrative at the expense of other themes.

   The next king for whom there is any relevant information is Tiglath-pileser III (744–727 B.C.). Although he apparently built a palace at Nimrud, identified as the Central Palace, the structure is now largely eroded (Reade 1968; 1977:314–315), and the reliefs are therefore very poorly preserved. In addition, some of the sculptural decoration from this palace was apparently removed and re-used in the Southwest Palace of Esarhaddon (Barnett and Falkner 1962). Of those Central Palace reliefs still *in situ*, it has been possible to reconstruct representations of two campaigns, one against Babylon in 745 B.C. and the other possibly against Media, in 737 B.C. (Reade 1968:72). Each room apparently also contained a complete version of the Annals of the king, as was also the case with the later Sargon II but not with Assurnasirpal, who condensed the Annals into his Standard Inscription. In the siege scenes of Tiglath-pileser, we see many connections with the Throneroom reliefs of Assurnasirpal—in captured cities and goods and falling enemy—but there is also a general increase in overlapping figures and animals (Barnett and Falkner 1962: Pls. XXVI, XXVIII); more complex spatial renderings of citadels in their landscape (Ibid.: Pl. XL); and perhaps even a purposeful use of the total field of the register, including diagonal rows of animals to suggest the recession of space beyond the picture plane (as suggested by Groenewegen-Frankfort 1951:175).

   In general, in the expansion of historical narrations throughout the palace, in the allotment of individual campaigns to individual rooms, and in the greater use of the pictorial field, Sargon's reliefs look ahead to those of his son, Sennacherib (704–681 B.C.), as well as to those of Assurbanipal (668–627 B.C.), both of whose palaces were discovered at Nineveh (Paterson 1915; Meissner and Opitz 1939). The reliefs of Sennacherib in particular show not only seascapes but also

campaigns against a patterned background of terrain that implies the three-dimensional space in which the action took place (Paterson 1915: Pls. 68–76, 83–84; here, fig. 21). In addition, Sennacherib expands the subjects of his narrative concerns to include building and quarrying activities related to domestic, internal events (Paterson 1915: Pls. 23–28, 31–35), and the diagonal lines along which he distributes men throughout the field are clear attempts to represent pictorial space (Groenewegen-Frankfort 1951; Akurgal 1968)—the closest we come, in fact, to a consistent perspective. The suppression of formerly more prominent figures in favor of the overall composition (Reade 1980a:73) further reduces the conceptual component, thus strengthening the "perceptual." We must assume, I feel, that behind this interest in illusory space is the notion that the "truer" the space, the greater the degree of historicity, as if visual progress across the field of the relief were comparable to the actual progress of the army through its field (Bersani and Dutoit 1979:21). At the same time, we have no preserved heraldic or ceremonial reliefs of Sennacherib, nor any genii, and this, too, would tend to suggest an interest in the historically verifiable universe.

That interest notwithstanding, however, the representations of Sennacherib are no less "manipulated" than those of Assurnasirpal, but whereas the earlier reliefs were clearly divided into separate sequences of action and consequence, in the later scenes, time is telescoped into a single unit so that the flow from approach to siege to prisoners and booty becomes continuous and we are presented with simultaneous action within a single space.

It would seem that Sennacherib also arranged campaigns in specific rooms according to some conscious program. I have already mentioned the particular case of the Throneroom in the Southwest Palace at Nineveh, Room I, with its grand facade, which I feel purposely includes sea and mountain battles to encompass the Empire. In addition, a group of reliefs of activities amid marshes and palm trees decorated the north end of the northwest facade, which seems on the basis of comparison with reliefs of Court XIX in the same palace to be situated in Babylon (Paterson 1915: p. 3; Pls. 40–41, 43; plan, our fig. 18). Since the Babylonian campaigns of Sennacherib were the most important of his reign (Luckenbill 1927: §§ 234, 241–243), it seems neither accidental nor casual to have depicted them on the great facade, just as the eastern and western campaigns were inside, in Room I.[20]

---

[20] I think the placement of the Babylonian reliefs in Court XIX, with the Elamite campaigns in rooms to the right, Phoenician campaigns to the left, and Judea at the top,

It is really Sennacherib who begins to fully exploit the epigraph—a written label, inscribed directly on the face of the relief, identifying the scene and the action taking place, not only by content, but also by careful placement. For example, above the figure of the king seated on a carved throne in the hills before Lachish, we read: "Sennacherib, king of the universe, king of Assyria, sat upon a chair (while) the booty of Lachish passed before him" (Luckenbill 1927: § 489). For a literate audience, such epigraphs would tend, like captions to a photograph, to "quicken" the image (Barthes 1977a:25), thus avoiding possible misinterpretation—the caption being one of the major sources of information governing correct reading of a picture, along with knowledge of the visual code and an understanding of the context (Gombrich 1974:247). Such captions are different from texts which accompany an image, in that the text may be exactly parallel or it may be amplifying, providing more information, whereas the caption tends rather to focus, getting one closer to the intended meaning—that is, it "anchors" the image (Barthes 1977a:27; 1977b:38). For a nonliterate or semiliterate audience, as would be the case here, the relationship of word to image exists more on an ideal than a real level, but the increasing explicitness of the visual information is paralleled by the increasing explicitness of the accompanying epigraphs.

For Sargon II (721–705 B.C.), we have a great deal of information. In his inscriptions, we are told that the king restored and resided for a long part of his reign in the Northwest Palace at Nimrud before building his own new capital city and palace at Khorsabad, 15 kilometers northeast of Nineveh (Loud 1936).[21] That the palace of Assurnasirpal was an important model for the new building is clear in a comparison of the reliefs from the facade before the Throneroom of Sargon, designated Court VIII at Khorsabad, with those from the facade of Court D at Nimrud (ibid.: figs. 33–35); it is also clear in the apparent revival by Sargon of the use of griffin-demons or genii (Smith 1938: Pl. XXVII). Nevertheless, there is also a new mind at work,

---

is again likely to be nonrandom. A programmatic study of the decorative scheme of the Palace of Sennacherib is badly needed; and now that Reade has accomplished the herculean task of correlating the published plates of reliefs with individual rooms (1979c:86–90), this task may be undertaken.

[21] As articulated by Liverani (1979:308), the restoration of the older palace becomes an expression of the dual function of the king: to maintain balance between past and future, not just by founding the new but also by maintaining the old order (i.e., re-new).

in the great expansion of the use of the register as a spatial field for both land- and seascapes (Loud 1936: figs. 83, 84, 87–89). Also, as el-Amin (1953) and Reade (1976) have demonstrated, the expansion of the concept of historical narrative may be charted, not only in the amount of wall space it occupies, as the sieges become the major decorative theme in many of the rooms, but also in that campaigns of specific years, as known from the Annals, are organized visually as units within individual rooms. In fact, once one accepts this purposeful organization in the reliefs of Sargon, it becomes even more likely that there was a similar intention to refer directly to specific campaigns in the Throneroom of Assurnasirpal; and we have also suggested that the mountain-sea duality in campaigns chosen to be illustrated on the throne base of Sargon (fig. 17) was a conscious reference to the extent of the Empire from the Zagros to the Mediterranean at the time, as was also his use of two registers of tributaries from east (lower) and west (upper) along both sides of the passage of Corridor 10 in the palace. What is more, Reade has noted the purposeful composition of scenes, such that the figure of the king and the culmination of the action is likely to be placed opposite the doorway, to be immediately apparent (1979c:83); this is comparable to the placement of slabs 23 and 13 in the Throneroom of Assurnasirpal.

The epigraphs of Assurbanipal are even more extensive than those of Sennacherib (Luckenbill 1927: §§ 1040–1117), as are his narrative sequences. Where Sennacherib had more or less done away with the double register on a slab in order to enlarge scale and focus attention on the all-encompassing action, Assurbanipal plays with both register and field, combining figures in great density (figs. 22, 23, 24). Visual rhythms that aid the reading of the narrative are established not only across a single register, but from register to register, as in the case of his battle against the Arabs, where camels racing from right to left are shown at the far right in the upper register, progressively toward the middle in the second, and finally at the bottom left, so that one takes in the movement of all three registers at once (fig. 22). This added complexity is apparent in the hunt scenes as well (Bersani and Dutoit 1979; but their generalizations on Neo-Assyrian art on the basis of Assurbanipal should be read with caution). The original sources in Assurnasirpal for these hunt scenes are readily apparent, even to the king's pouring a libation over the dead animals (fig. 23); yet the additional episodes and the addition of a third register allow for considerably expanded treatment of the theme (Barnett 1976: Pls. A, E). Accompanying this

profusion of narrative information are a number of stylistic changes:
gone are the bulky figures of Assurnasirpal, executed in broad, flat
planes and surrounded by a great deal of negative space; instead, human
and animal figures decrease in proportion and scale to permit greater
peopling of the pictorial field, and at the same time, greater attention
is paid to surface patterning and detail that complements the busyness
of the scene. These stylistic changes, then, have adaptive advantages
(Wobst 1977:321) for the narrative intentions of Assurbanipal's artists,
the results of which are that far more information is packed into a single
sequence, just as far greater detail is now included in royal texts (e.g.,
Luckenbill 1927: §§ 807, 823). But the price paid is so much distrac-
tion that sometimes the focus of the action is almost missed, as in the
case where Assyrian soldiers decapitate an officer of the king of Elam
in the midst of battle (Reade 1979b; here, fig. 24).

    At their most successful, the registers proceed in fugue, related to each
other as well as along their own lines, and attaining heights of drama
never seen in the works of Assurnasirpal. Occasionally, however, the
nonessential amplifiers of these scenes get in the way of the clear read-
ing of the narrative. Although Bersani and Dutoit (1979) have argued
that this distraction is conscious, obviating emphasis on any single focal
point and putting all elements into the service of the whole episode,
the expansion of the total number of sub-episodes, nevertheless, can
sometimes work against the narrative, or at least require much more
accomplished reading.

    In content, one may say that the narratives of Assurbanipal con-
tinue in the direction we have seen after Assurnasirpal, away from the
cultic and mythological, toward greater historical specificity, and the
proliferation of historical scenes throughout the entire palace. Yet there
is also some continuity with the prototype. From Reade's reconstruc-
tion (1979c:104) of Room M, the Throneroom of Assurbanipal in the
North Palace at Nineveh, we see that, whereas adjacent Rooms I, J,
and L contain individual campaigns, the Throneroom combines several:
Babylon, Elam, Egypt, and some unspecified mountain country. Since
Babylon is south, Elam is east, Egypt considered to the far west, it may
be well that the mountain country would have been in the north, which
was indeed mountainous, thus elaborating on the earlier notion of
boundaries of the realm depicted in the central room. In any event, in
the multiplicity of campaigns alone, guiding principles similar to those
of Assurnasirpal must still have been operative, providing the conceptual
basis upon which the Throneroom decoration was chosen.

Governing Principles

How then do we account for the loss of the mythological and cultic scenes within the continuity and development of the historical narrative over time? I believe these phenomena can be accounted for if we take into consideration the context of the reliefs and their intended audience in conjunction with the historical process Assyria went through in the establishment and development of the Empire from the ninth through the seventh century B.C.

Despite the archaeological accident that the complete decorative programs of intermediary Throneroooms have not been preserved (see Reade 1980b, however, for thoughts on this), the fact that the two reception rooms bracketing the sequence represent a similar range of historical narratives strongly argues for cultural intention rather than idiosyncracy in the decorative schemes. That intentionality, manifest in a public context (the primary reception suite of the palace), further implies the desire that the concepts underlying the intentions be perceivable (received) by those individuals physically received into the royal presence. Now, the ability to receive the message contained in the program, as many have noted, is a direct function of the effectiveness and clarity of the presentation of the message, the "packaging" (Chafe 1976), and of the cognitive competence of the audience: the stored knowledge brought to the situation, ability to understand signs and signals, and skill in decoding (Greimas and Courtès 1976; O. Grabar 1972:563; Gross 1974:60; Gombrich 1974:250; Barthes 1977c:116; Chatman 1979).

In the reliefs of Assurnasirpal, we saw a much greater use of cultic and mythological representations which had had a long history in Mesopotamia, in addition to the introduction of the truly historical narrative. The cultic and mythological scenes require a considerably greater degree of symbolic representation—images for which one must have prior knowledge of the story or custom *behind* what is represented. This constitutes, in other words, what Schapiro (1973:9) has called "reductive imagery": the text, oral or written, must be known in advance.

Precisely what the historical narratives offer is the parallelism between text and image, as opposed to dependence. They require a knowledge of context, but not necessarily of the text itself, for that can be read from the image. The historical narrative therefore simply does not require a code in the same way as a cultic or mythological scene would; it demands less previous knowledge and/or decoding skill (less competence: Culler 1975) from the viewer.

While the historical narrative may thus make fewer demands upon an audience, this can be deceptively manipulated by the "encoder," however. Particularizing elements place the narrative in time and space, attempting to make an equation between pure denotation and truth. As these elements "record," they also serve to verify the natural order (or so the Assyrians would have us perceive). The narratives are then significantly different from other types of representation, because while they are so easily readable on the surface, that very readability in fact "masks the constructed meaning under the appearance of the given" (Barthes 1977b:47).

It is therefore not surprising that the historical narratives of Assurnasirpal began quite simply, both in style and in compositional articulation. The reliefs of the later Neo-Assyrian period clearly move in the direction of greater narrative complexity. Reade has documented this expansion, without, however, putting it into developmental perspective (1979c). To the extent that the reliefs of Assurnasirpal mark the initiation of the genre, one must see them as the early stages of both conception and reading, when images will be simplified and what does not contribute to the immediate core of the message will be eliminated as potentially distracting (Richards 1974:118); and one is even tempted to wonder if there is not a consciousness behind the placement of the simpler sieges 18a and 17a closest to the throne in the Northwest Palace, moving toward the more complex sieges further down as the wall progresses (e.g., slabs 4a–3a, 5b–3b).

Implications are that, as the audience learns to discern what is significant, the genre can become more complexly organized. This is not an absolute, evolutionary statement for all cases; but here, where, by virtue of presentation in public suites of the royal palace, the clear intention is to communicate a message relating to the idea of the state and the institution of kingship, the sender of the message must be certain that it will be understood. Continued exposure and familiarity with the conventions would then pave the way for greater complexity and variation, once the main themes were known.

Such a process would give meaning to the internal development of the genre. But this must then be put into conjunction with the principles that governed the gradual elimination of heraldic and cultic schemes as well; and here, I feel, the external history of Assyria and the expansion of the Empire must be brought into the picture.[22]

---

[22] The relationship between label and image in ancient Mesopotamian and Assyrian art is a subject which should be pursued. Not only were the bronze bands of the

While Assurnasirpal and his father, Tukulti Ninurta II, had begun to extend the political boundaries of Assyria beyond the immediate region of northern Mesopotamia, real territorial expansion and the absorption of provinces into an administrated empire began with Shalmaneser III and was further consolidated under Tiglath-pileser III, such that Garelli (1979:319) would actually see this later period as the beginning of true "Empire."[23] Expansion continued with Sargon and subsequent kings, reaching ultimately to Egypt, Anatolia, the Iranian plateau, and Babylon (Smith 1960). All during this time, the current capital—whether Nimrud, Khorsabad, or Nineveh—served as the official center of the Empire, and must have included a complexly heterogeneous population. Not only did Assurnasirpal write of inviting delegations from surrounding territories to his inauguration ceremonies at Nimrud, but he also settled conquered peoples from Suḫu and Laqé, Zamua, Bit Adini, Carchemish, and Patina in the new capital (Grayson 1976: § 653). Those invited to the inauguration banquet included representatives from more far-reaching regions, from northwest Iran to the Phoenician coast and the Anatolian highlands, and it was explicitly stated that they were invited to the consecration of the palace itself (ibid.: § 682). Thus, right from the beginning there was a heterogeneous ethnic and cultural audience for the palace reliefs. Sargon further incorporated units of conquered soldiers into his army and increased the complexity of the

---

Balawat Gates of both Assurnasirpal and Shalmaneser III frequently accompanied by identifying inscription in the upper field (see Barnett 1975; King 1915), but so also were earlier monuments, such as the Akkadian stele of Naram–Sin cited above. In addition, there is a series of Old Babylonian period (ca. 1800 B.C.) texts from Nippur that were apparently copies of the labels from other Akkadian monuments, now lost, that had been standing visible in the courtyard of the Enlil Temple in Nippur (some examples of which are preserved in the Babylonian Collection, University Museum; they will be published by P. Michalowski, to whom I am grateful for this communication). The incorporation of epigraphic labels on architectural reliefs, however, does not seem to have been fully exploited until Sennacherib.

[23] Garelli goes on to note, however, that from a modern perspective, despite territorial expansion, the state remains in effect a "realm" or "kingdom" more than an Empire—just as the rulers remain kings, never Emperors, their titles merely expanding to include dominion over "the totality." The term Empire has nonetheless continued to be used as a convenience for expressing the accretion of territory; but I think the distinction is an important one. It would make of Achaemenid Persia a substantially different degree of "Empire" in that while in Assyria there is still an attempt to see the expanded country as a single state effectively creating a homogeneous population from diverse peoples, the Achaemenids of the sixth to fifth century B.C. were the first to acknowledge the impossibility of this and emphasized rather variety in *subjects*, not just in external places conquered. Such a distinction would account further for many of the significant differences from Neo-Assyrian to Achaemenid art, many of which have been ably demonstrated by Root (1979).

diplomatic and political constituency of the capital; in the complaint of Esarhaddon (680–669 B.C.) that an envoy from the Sea-lands was *not* sent is implied the fact that foreign envoys were expected to be at the capital (Saggs 1963:145–146).

Hence, as the Empire grew, so did the heterogeneity of the general population and of the prospective audience for the ideological messages incorporated into the art of the public reception suites. We therefore come back to the importance of the receivability of signals, since we have already established the intention to transmit such signals. And we have also suggested that the historical narrative may be read with less prior knowledge than other sorts of imagery. Whether this is due to the fact that a determinate sequence of events is easier to follow because it recapitulates linear human experience (and linguistic utterances; Holloway 1979:482), or whether it is because these particular historical narratives, with their specificity of time and place, were so immediate, it *is* clear that they demanded less degree of shared cultural experience than motifs such as the king and the sacred tree, for example. That the motif is not lost entirely is evident in its use in miniature as decoration on garments worn by Assurbanipal. However, while Reade has made the appealing suggestion that it could have been present in later Thronerooms as wall-hangings, thereby accounting for otherwise inexplicable blank slabs behind the throne base of Sargon and opposite the central doorway of Assurbanipal (Reade 1980b:81), it was certainly not perpetuated throughout the palace, as had been the case with Assurnasirpal. I would suggest that, the growth in complexity of the historical narrative during the period notwithstanding, their proliferation at the expense of cultic and mythological images represents a lowering of the common denominator of what would be intelligible to a heterogeneous audience, and that these developments were a direct response to the increased heterogeneity of the Empire as it developed.[24]

Sociologists have dealt at length with the processes by which a dominant culture absorbs diverse ethnic groups into a unified population,

---

[24] Both explicit and implicit corroboration for this may be found in the work of several scholars. Chafe (1976:54–55) notes how, in order to get the message across, the sender must pay "due consideration to the current state of the listener's mind." Hannestad (1979:365) records the shift in Rome from Republic to Empire and the consequent changes from a rather esoteric iconography beamed at an educated elite to a "lower level of communication" aimed at a middle class and across a widespread geographical area. Finally, Liverani (1979:300) discusses how the central ideology of a conquering culture functions to suppress the culture and ideology of conquered/absorbed places, creating a "leveling out of culture throughout the Empire."

concentrating, however, on the social issues of power and control and adaptation rather than on the resultant symbol systems developed around the process.[25] Nevertheless, it is clearly articulated that social order is dependent upon a feeling of shared group identity (Weber 1978 ed.: 395–398). Marx (1978 ed.: 612–613) deals further with the importance of military defense and exterior threats (hence, military *symbols*) in effectively forging social unity, and Simmel (1964 ed.) with *why* and *how* military symbols serve to create a common political consciousness and thus a common history for a group. This raises an aspect of the Neo-Assyrian historical narratives not previously considered: the need for military symbols. The battle scenes are thus not only historical records; by giving voice to potential threats, they also reinforce the need for maintaining the king/ruling elite in power and at the same time serve to create a common history for the Empire which reinforces past shared experience. This view is further reinforced by turning to Durkheim (1972 ed.: 145), who noted that as social complexity increases, the "collective consciousness" of a group declines and affiliation is forged instead through shared needs—hence the need to *emphasize* shared needs if one aims at social cohesion.

Hymes has posed the issue in terms of situations in which there exist a diversity of languages within the community and the necessity of arriving at social codes and communication systems that are mutually intelligible, if not a shared language (1967); and it is interesting that precisely within the Neo-Asssyrian Empire in the eighth century—during the reign of Tiglath-pileser, apparently—there is a shift to the use of Aramaic rather than the native Akkadian as *a lingua franca*, certainly at least partially in response to the incorporation of much western Semitic territory into the Empire at that time.[26] Another of the ways in which cohesion is established is through the generation of shared cultural materials (Kroeber 1948:68). Among these last, the importance of symbol systems as prime carriers of cultural values should not be underestimated. Thus Needham (1979:5), following Durkheim, notes

---

[25] Anthropologists, on the other hand, have discussed symbol systems at length (Cohen 1969; Munn 1973; Firth 1973; Lévi-Strauss 1974:178–198); however, for the most part they have concentrated on less complex societies. The questions are at least posed (see Cohen 1969:218, 232) regarding the role of symbols in relations of power, and the degree to which art is affected by and in turn affects political relationships.

[26] Papers by P. Garelli, Université de Paris, and H. Tadmor, Hebrew University, Jerusalem, will eventually be published on this subject in Nissen and Renger, eds., *Mesopotamien und seine Nachbarn*, Proceedings of the XXV Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale, in Berlin, 1978.

that "the function of social symbols…is not merely to mark or enhance the importance of what is symbolized, but also to evoke and sustain an emotional commitment to what is decreed to be important in the social group in question…." Symbolism therefore is "doubly necessary: to mark what is socially important and to induce men to conform in recognizing the values by which they should live."

That the diversity of the existing audience should have been taken into account in the encoding process of Neo-Assyrian reliefs is logical if social cohesion was part of the aims of the state, and we know from contemporary Assyrian texts that such was indeed the case: stress was placed on resettling conquered groups and "counting them as Assyrians" (Liverani 1979:312); and in the second titulary of the Standard Inscription itself, Assurnasirpal announces that through his military activities he has "brought under one authority…. kings from east to west" (Grayson 1976: § 652.) Furthermore, as Wobst has argued (1977:324), the ideal target group for public communications is precisely the group at some intermediary social distance from the emitter of the message. Those very close will already know, and (re-)affirmation will be taking place on many levels (not the least of which being that those who are part of the power elite will have a stake in keeping that elite in power). Those very far away, by contrast, would not be able to decode or use the message. The group that is socially distant but potentially able to receive should therefore be the intended object of the communicative act. As the range of the "target groups" widened with the expansion of the Assyrian Empire, the need to lower the common denominator without substantially changing the message became evident. And precisely because the target group is at a certain social distance, one may assume that the majority of the messages will be related to the process of social cohesion and integration (Wobst 1977:327)—in our terms, the various battles and conquests all adding up to the centrality of Assyria and the subsuming of all surrounding regions into the Assyrian political entity, through the action of the king and the patronage of the gods.[27]

---

[27] As Reade has observed (1979a:332), once a region shifts status from an enemy or tributary state to a province within the Assyrian imperial bureaucracy, it is no longer depicted in reliefs, and this is relevant in the present context precisely because once the province has become part of greater Assyria, the emphasis must be on reinforcing membership and invoking common cause against the farther periphery, thus strengthening dependency on the center (see note 23).

It should further be acknowledged that, while we have been immediately concerned with the *affect* of generated symbol systems, such systems are articulated and propounded by individuals in power, to proclaim and to achieve certain ends. Thus Geertz (1977:152–153) observes that "at the political center of any complex organized society,...(is) both a governing elite and a set of symbolic forms expressing the fact that it [the elite] is in truth governing." The selection of the palace for the major messages of the state reinforces this view; and the choice of the highly visible outer facades, the inner public court facades, the throne-rooms and throne bases as the most publicly accessible places within the palaces for the most explicit messages supports the foregoing thesis of the intended target group—just as outer layers of clothing, visible from a distance and publicly accessible, become major personal communication acts (Sahlins 1976:179–191; Wobst 1977:300–335).

Conclusions

On these terms, it would seem that the development of the historical narrative in art is closely bound to the historical development of the Neo-Assyrian Empire. The palace relief-decoration becomes a "message produced in the artifact mode" (Wobst 1977:322), and the representations become carriers of the prevailing ideology on a public scale.

To understand the "communicative" intent of the Neo-Assyrian reliefs and their use in a decorative program is not to negate the experiential aspect of the work(s) of art, but to strengthen it by embedding the work in its historical context (Ettlinger 1971; Deinhard 1975; Mukarovsky 1978). I have tried to deal elsewhere with the way in which the periphery processed stimuli from the center in the Neo-Assyrian period (Winter 1977), and the way in which the center borrowed from the periphery for its own ends (Winter, forthcoming). We are here concerned with the way in which the center *draws in* the periphery, once it has established a coherent system of communications.

The introduction of the historical narrative is then tied to a situation in which the king is both strong and engaged in "events" as opposed to mere maintenance (Moscati 1963:105); and these narratives in turn become essential to the Empire, not just "representing," but actually playing a role in the shaping of thought. The same message could have taken a number of forms, as, for example, the more ideographic "king smiting" became the expression of royal and national power in

ancient Egyptian art. As the code of connotation is neither universal nor entirely invented, but rather is "historical" (Barthes 1977a:27), the question must arise: Why did the formulation of the Assyrian message take the particular shape it did? To say that there was a long tradition in Mesopotamian art and culture of recording the event is merely to push the question back in time; but to do more at present would be outside the limits of the present discussion. The quantum leap taken in the reign of Assurnasirpal was the representation not of an episode or commemorative scene to stand for the whole, but rather of a fully developed narrative; and perhaps we may venture to generalize that, just as in the physical world of elementary particles, where "at each new level of complexity, entirely new properties appear" (Anderson 1972:393), so perhaps also with the development of the imperial state in Assyria, new cultural/art forms emerged that addressed the structure of the new social and political order.

The evolution of the historical narrative within the Neo-Assyrian period also becomes understandable on historical grounds: both the shifts toward exclusively narrative representations based upon the lowering of a common denominator of decoding and the necessity of maintaining a common denominator in the decorative program in the first place. Parallelism between text and image is also sustained, and the two similar yet independent structures can only be understood as essential isomorphisms generated by the identical culture (Beeman 1976; Vance 1973). To the extent that rhetoric may be defined as the "signifying aspect of ideology" (Barthes 1977b:49), both text and image represent the royal rhetoric of the Neo-Assyrian period.

In the articulation of this rhetoric, the king and the state are represented to a selected yet diverse audience. As the representative of a cultural institution, the king is not only the subject but also the composer of the message. The work is the message; the audience, the decoding receiver. The value of beaming a message on the scale of the Neo-Assyrian palace reliefs is that the message, once the original cost is expended, is relatively permanent; it continues to be emitted without further maintenance for the lifetime of the building, and in effect, the message and the messenger become one.

The role the king must play in relation to society is not new in Mesopotamian tradition; but the extent of his constituency and the complexity of the political system has changed significantly. If his message is efficiently (successfully) encoded, its transmission will constitute an institutional activity, the result of which will be the strengthening of the

social system—for to the degree that the viewer accepts the message, he is also reassured as to his integration in society (Gross 1974:76; Barthes 1977a:31; Needham 1979:5). At that point, the display has become part of the message; the maintenance of the state and the power elite is embedded in the program; and the historical narratives in Neo-Assyrian palaces function as prime vehicles for royal rhetoric.

Acknowledgments

References

Abu es-Soof, B. 1963. Further Investigations in Assur-nasir-pal's Palace. Sumer 19:66–68.

Akurgal, E. 1968. The Art of Greece: Its Origins. New York: Crown.

el-Amin, M. 1953–54. Die Reliefs mit Beischriften von Sargon II in Dur Sharrukin. Sumer 9:35–59, 214–218; Sumer 10:23–42.

Anderson, P. W. 1972. More Is Different: Broken Symmetry and the Nature of the Hierarchical Structure of Science. Science 177(4147):393–396.

Barnett, R. D. 1967. Assyria and Iran: The Earliest Representations of Persians. *In* A Survey of Persian Art, vol. XIV. A. U. Pope, ed. Pp. 2997–3007. Tokyo: Meiji-Shobo.

——. 1973. More Balawat Gates: A Preliminary Report. *In* Symbolae Biblicae. M. A. Beek et al., eds. Pp. 19–22. Leiden: E. J. Brill.

——. 1975. Assyrian Sculpture in the British Museum. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart.

——. 1976. Sculpture from the North Palace of Assurbanipal at Nineveh. London: The British Museum.

——, and M. Faulkner. 1962. The Sculptures of Assurnasirpal II, Tiglath Pileser III and Esarhaddon from the Central and Southwest Palaces at Nimrud. London: The British Museum.

Barthes, R. 1977a. The Photographic Message. *In* Image, Music, Text. Pp. 15–31. New York: Hill and Wang. (Originally published as Le message photographique. Communications 1 [1961]).

——. 1977b. Rhetoric of the Image. *In* Image, Music, Text. Pp. 32–51. New York: Hill and Wang. (Originally published as Rhetorique de l'image. Communications 4 [1964]).

——. 1977c. Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narrative. *In* Image, Music, Text. Pp. 79–124. New York: Hill and Wang. (Originally published as Introduction a l'analyse structurale des recits, Communications 8 [1966]).

Baxandall, M. 1971. The Language of Art History. New Literary History X:453–465

Beeman, W. 1976. What is (Iranian) National Character? A Socio-Linguistic Approach. Iranian Studies IX:22–48.

Bersani, L. and U. Dutoit. 1979. The Forms of Violence. October 8:17–29.

Biddle, M. 1963. Nonesuch Palace. Journal of the London Society 363:14–30.

Blanton, R. E. 1976. The Anthropological Study of Cities. Annual Review of Anthropology 5:249–264.

Brandes, M. 1969. La salle dite "G" du palais d'Assurnasirpal II a Kalakh, lieu de ceremonie rituelle. *In* Compte rendu de la XVIIe Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale. Pp. 147–154. Paris: Paul Geuthner.

Breasted, J. H. 1932. Assyrian Relief Sculpture and the Influence of Egyptian Art. Studies Presented to F. L. Griffith. Pp. 267–271. London: Egyptian Exploration Society.

Budge, E. A. W. 1914. Assyrian Sculptures in the British Museum: Reign of Ashur-nasir-pal, 885–860 B.C. London: The British Museum.

Chafe, W. 1976. Giveness, Contrastiveness, Definitiveness, Subject, Topic and Points of View. *In* Subject and Topic. E. N. Li, ed. Pp. 25–55. New York: Academic Press.

Chatman, S. 1979. The Styles of Narrative Codes. *In* The Concept of Style. B. Lang, ed. Pp. 169–181. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Cohen, A. 1969. Political Anthropology: The Analysis of the Symbolism of Power Relations. Man 4:215–235.

Cohen, G. 1976. Visual Imagery in Thought. New Literary History VII:513–523

Corrigan, K. 1978. The Ivory Scepter of Leo VI: A Statement of Post-Iconoclastic Imperial Ideology. Art Bulletin 60:407–416.

Culler, J. 1973. Structure of Ideology and Ideology of Structure. New Literary History IV:471–482.

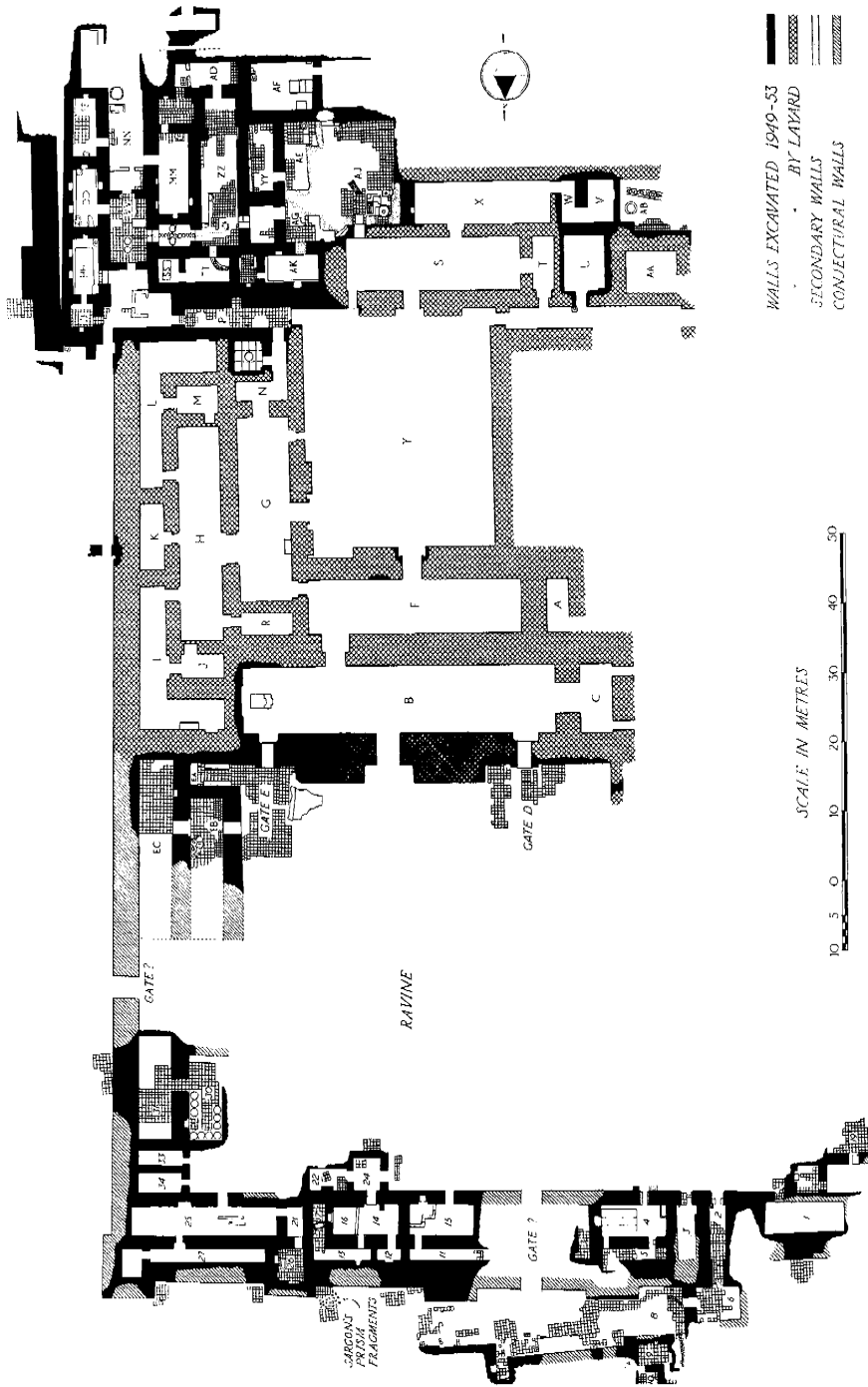——. 1975. Structuralist Poetics. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press.

Davis-Weyer, C. 1971. Early Medieval Art 300–1150. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall.

de Filippi, W. 1977. The Royal Inscriptions of Assur-Nasir-Apil II (883–59 B.C.): A Study of the Chronology of the Calah Inscriptions together with an Edition of Two of These Texts Assur I(7):123–269.

Deinhard, H. 1975. Reflections on Art History and Sociology of Art. Art Journal XXXV(1):29–32.

Durkheim, E. 1972. ed. Selected Writings. A. Giddens, ed. Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press.

Ettlinger, L. D. 1965. The Sistine Chapel before Michelangelo: Religious Imagery and Papal Primacy. Oxford: Clarendon.

——. 1971. Kunstgeschichte als Geschichte. Jahrbuch des Hamburger Kunstsammlungen 16:7–19.

Firth, R. 1973. Symbols Public and Private. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Frankfort, H., 1948, Kingship and the Gods. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

——. 1954. Art and Architecture of the Ancient Orient. Baltimore: Pelican.

Gadd, C. J. 1934. The Assyrian Sculptures London: The British Museum.

Garelli, P. 1974. Remarques sur l'administration de l'Empire Assyrien. Revue d'Assyriologie 68:129–140.

——. 1979. L'état et la legitimité royale sous l'Empire Assyrien. In Power and Propaganda. M. Trolle Larsen, ed. Pp. 319–325. Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag.

Geertz, C. 1977. Centers, Kings and Charisma: Reflections on the Symbolism of Power. In Culture and Its Creators: Essays in Honor of Edward Shils. J. Ben-David and T. N. Clark, eds. Pp. 150–171. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Givon, T. 1976. Topic, Pronoun, and Grammatical Agreement: In Subject and Topic. E. N. Li, ed. Pp. 151–185. New York: Academic Press.

Gombrich, E. H. 1960. Art and Illusion: A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation. New York: Pantheon; London: Phaidon.

——. 1966. Norm and Form. London: Phaidon.

——. 1969. Art and Illusion: A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation. 2d. ed. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Bollingen Series, 35.

——. 1974. The Visual Image. In Media and Symbols: Forms of Expression, Communication and Education. D. E. Olson, ed. Pp. 241–270. Chicago: National Society for the Study of Education. (Originally published in Scientific American 227 [September 1972], pp. 82–96).

Gorse, G. 1980. The Decorative Program of the Villa Doria in Genoa. Lecture presented at the University of Pennsylvania, 23 February.

Grabar, A. 1936. L'empereur dans l'art byzantin. Paris: Les Belles Lettres (Publications de la Faculté des Lettres de l'Université de Strasbourg. Fasc. 75).

Grabar, O. 1972. History of Art and History of Literature: Some Random Thoughts. New Literary History III:559–568.

Grayson, A. K. 1976. Assyrian Royal Inscriptions 2. Wiesbaden: O. Harrassowitz.

Greimas, A. J. and J. Courtès. 1976. The Cognitive Dimension of Narrative Discourse. New Literary History VIII:433–447.

Groenewegen-Frankfort, H. A. 1951. Arrest and Movement. London: Faber and Faber.

Gross, L. 1974. Modes of Communication and the Acquisition of Symbolic Competence. In Media and Symbols: Forms of Expression, Communication and Education. D. E. Olson, ed. Pp. 56–80. Chicago: National Society for the Study of Education.

Güterbock, H. G. 1957. Narration in Anatolian, Syrian and Assyrian Art. American Journal of Archaeology 61:62–71.

Hamberg, P. G. 1945. Studies in Roman Imperial Art. Copenhagen: E. Munksgaard.

Hannestad, N. 1979. Rome—Ideology and Art: Some Distinctive Features. In Power and Propaganda. M. Trolle Larsen, ed. Pp. 361–390. Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag.

Holloway, J. 1979. Art-Ontology and Social Engineering. New Literary History X:479–494.

Hulin, P. 1963. The Inscription on the Carved Throne-base of Salmaneser III. Iraq 25:48–69.

Hymes, D. 1967. Models of the Interaction of Language and Social Setting. Journal of Social Issues 23:8–28.

Jakobsen, R., 1970, On the Verbal Art of William Blake and Other Poet-Painters. Linguistic Inquiry I:3–23.

———. 1971. On Realism in Art. In Readings in Russian Poetics: Formalist and Structuralist Views. L. Matejka and K. Pomoroska, eds. Pp. 38–46. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press. (Originally published in Czechoslovakia, 1921.)

Kantor, H. J. 1957. Narration in Egyptian Art. American Journal of Archaeology 61:44–54.

King, L. W. 1915. Bronze Reliefs from the Gates of Shalmaneser, King of Assyria. London: The British Museum.

Kraeling, C. H. 1957. Narration in Ancient Art: A Symposium. American Journal of Archaeology 61:43.

Kroeber, A. L. 1948. Anthropology. New York: Harcourt, Brace.

Larsen, M. Trolle. 1974. The City and Its King: On the Old Assyrian Notion of Kingship. In Le Palais et la Royauté. XIXe Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale. P. Garelli, ed. Pp. 285–300. Paris: P. Geuthner.

Layard, A. H. 1849a. The Monuments of Nineveh. London: J. Murray.

———, 1849b, Nineveh and Its Remains. London: J. Murray.

Lévi-Strauss, C. 1973. From Honey to Ashes. New York: Harper and Row. (Originally published as Du miel aux cendres, Paris, 1966).

———. 1974. Tristes Tropiques. New York: Harper and Row. (Originally published in Paris, 1955.) See especially Chap. 5: A Native Community and Its Life-Style, Pp. 178–198.

———. 1975. The Raw and the Cooked. New York: Harper and Row. (Originally published as Le cru et le cuit. Paris, 1964).

Liverani, M. 1973. Memorandum on the Approach to Historiographic Texts. Gelb Festschrift. G. Buccellati, ed. In Orientalia 42:178–194.

———. 1979. The Ideology of the Assyrian Empire. Power and Propaganda. M. T. Larsen, ed. Pp. 297–317. Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag.

Loud, G. 1936. Khorsabad I. (Oriental Institute Publications XXXVIII). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Luckenbill, D. D. 1926. Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia, Vol. I. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

———. 1927. Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia, Vol. II. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

MacDougall, E. B. Forthcoming. Throne Rooms and Audience Halls of the Italian Renaissance and Their Decorations. Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks.

Mallowan, M. 1953. The Excavations at Nimrud (Kalhu), 1952. Iraq 15:1–42.

———. 1966. Nimrud and Its Remains, 2 vols. New York: Dodd, Mead.

Mango, C. 1972. The Art of the Byzantine Empire, 312–1453. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall.

Marx, K. 1978. ed. The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon. In The Marx-Engels Reader. R. Tucker, ed. 2d. ed. Pp. 594–617. New York: Norton.

Mauss, M. 1967. ed. The Gift: Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies. New York: W. W. Norton. (Originally published as Essai sur le don, Paris, 1925).

Meissner, B. and D. Opitz. 1939. Studien zum Bît Hilāni im Nordpalast Assurbanaplis zu Nineveh. Berlin: de Gruyter.

Meusczyński, J. 1975. The Throne-Room of Assur-nasir-apil II (Room B in the North-West Palace at Nimrud). Zeitschrift für Assyriologie 64:51–67.

———. 1976. Neo-Assyrian Reliefs from the Central Area of Nimrud Citadel. Iraq 38:37–44.

———. 1979. La façade de la salle du trône au Palais Nord-Oest à Nimrud. Études et Travaux xi:5–13.

Moortgat, A. 1969. The Art of Ancient Mesopotamia. London: Phaidon.

Moscati, S. 1963. Historical Art in the Ancient Near East. Rome: Università di Roma, Centra di Studi Semitici, Studi Semitici 8.

Mukarovsky, J. 1978. The Place of the Aesthetic Function among the Other Functions. *In* Structure, Sign, and Function: Selected Essays by Jan Mukartovsky. J. Burbank and P. Steiner, eds. Pp. 31–48. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Munn, N. 1973. Walbiri Iconography. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press.

Needham, R. 1979. Symbolic Classification. Santa Monica, Calif.: Goodyear.

Nylander, C. 1979. Achaemenid Imperial Art. *In* Power and Propaganda. M. Trolle Larsen, ed. Pp. 345–359. Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag.

Oates, D. 1963. The Excavations at Nimrud (Kalhu), 1962. Iraq 25:6–37.

Olmstead, A. T. 1918. The Calculated Frightfulness of Ashur Nasir Apal. Journal of the American Oriental Society 38:209–263.

Oppenheim, A. L. 1960. The City of Assur in 714 B.C. Journal of Near Eastern Studies 19:133–147.

——. 1964. Ancient Mesopotamia. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Orthmann, W. 1971. Untersuchungen zur späthetitischen Kunst. Bonn: Rudolf Habelt Verlag.

Paley, S. M. 1976. King of the World: Ashur-nasir-pal II of Assyria 883–859 B.C. Brooklyn, N.Y.: The Brooklyn Museum.

Partridge, L. 1978. Divinity and Dynasty at Caprarola: Perfect History in the Room of Farnese Deeds. Art Bulletin 60:494–530.

Paterson, A. 1915. Assyrian Sculptures: The Palace of Sinacherib. The Hague: M. Nijhoff.

Perkins, A. L. 1957. Narration in Babylonian Art. American Journal of Archaeology 61:54–62.

Postgate, N., and J. E. Reade. 1977. Kalhu. Reallexikon der Assyriologie V(3/4):303–321

Reade, J. E. 1963. A Glazed-Brick Panel from Nimrud. Iraq 25:38–47.

——. 1965. Twelve Assurnasirpal Reliefs. Iraq 27:119–134.

——. 1968. The Palace of Tiglath Pileser III. Iraq 30:69–73.

——. 1976. Sargon's Campaigns of 720, 716 and 715 B.C.: Evidence from the Sculptures. Journal of Near Eastern Studies 35:95–104.

——. 1979a. Ideology and Propaganda in Assyrian Art. *In* Power and Propaganda. M. T. Larsen, ed. Pp. 329–343. Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag.

——. 1979b. Assyrian Architectural Decoration: Techniques and Subject Matter. Baghdader Mitteilungen 10:17–49.

——. 1979c. Narrative Composition in Assyrian Sculpture. Baghdader Mitteilungen 10:52–110.

——. 1980a. Space, Scale and Significance in Assyrian Art. Baghdader Mitteilungen 11:71–74.

——. 1980b. The Architectural Context of Assyrian Sculpture. Baghdader Mitteilungen 11:75–87.

Richards, I. A. 1974. Powers and Limits of Signs. *In* Media and Symbols: Forms of Expression, Communication and Education. D. E. Olson, ed. Pp. 99–121. Chicago: National Society for the Study of Education.

Rio, M. 1976. Images and Words. New Literary History VII:505–512.

Root, M. C. 1979. The King and Kingship in Achaemenid Art: Essays on the Creation of an Iconography. Leiden: E. J. Brill.

Rosenberg, C. N. 1979. The Iconography of the Sala degli Stucchi in the Palazzo Schifansia in Ferrara. Art Bulletin 61: 377–384.

Sachs, A. J. 1953. The Late Assyrian Royal Seal Type. Iraq 15:167–170.

Saggs, H. W. F. 1963. Assyrian Warfare in the Sargonid Period. Iraq 25:145–154.

Sahlins, M. 1976. Culture and Practical Reason. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Schapiro, M. 1969. On Some Problems in the Semiotics of Visual Art: Field and Vehicle in image Signs. Semiotica I:223–242.

———. 1973. Words and Pictures. The Hague: Mouton.

Schlosser, J., Ritter von. 1891. Beitrage zur Kunstgeschichte, II. (In Kaiserliche Akademie der Wissenschaften, Vienna. Philosophisch-historische Classe. Sitzungsberichte. Band 123. Abh. 2).

Simmel, G. 1964. ed. Conflict and the Web of Group Affiliations. New York: The Free Press.

Smith, S. 1938. Assyrian Sculptures in the British Museum: From Shalmaneser III to Sennacherib. London: The British Museum.

———. 1960. Cambridge Ancient History, Vol. III.: The Assyrian Empire. Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press.

Soden, W. von. 1954. Herrscher im Alten Orient. Berlin: Springer.

Speiser, E. A. 1955. Ancient Mesopotamia. In The Idea of History in the Ancient Near East. R. C. Dentan, ed. Pp. 35–76. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Stearns, J. B. 1961. Reliefs from the Palace of Ashurnasirpal II. Graz: Archiv für Orientforschung.

Summers, D. 1979. Figure come fratelli: A Transformation of Symmetry in Renaissance Painting. Art Quarterly N.S.I.:59–88.

Todorov, T. 1977. The Poetics of Prose. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press. (Originally published as La poetique de la prose, Paris).

Turner, G. 1970. The State Apartments of Late Assyrian Palaces. Iraq 32:177–213.

Turner, V. 1974. Dramas, Fields and Metaphors: Symbolic Action in Human Society. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press.

Ussishkin, D. 1978. Excavations at Lachish, 1973–1977: Preliminary Report. Tel Aviv: Institute of Archaeology, Tel Aviv University.

Vance, E. 1973. Signs of the City: Medieval Poetry as Detour. New Literary History IV:557–574.

Wäfler, M. 1975. Nicht-Assyrer neuassyrischer Darstellungen. Altes Orient und Alte Testament 26. Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag.

Walter, C. 1970. Papal Political Imagery in the Medieval Lateran Palace. Cahiers archéologiques XX:155–176 and XXI:109–136.

Weber, M. 1978. Economy and Society. G. Roth and C. Wittich, eds. Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press.

Weitzmann, K. 1957. Narration in Early Christian and Byzantine Art. American Journal of Archaeology 61:83–91.

———. 1970. Illustration in Roll and Codex: A Study in the Origin and Method of Text Illustration. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

White, H. 1973. Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in 19th Century Europe. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

———. 1979. The Problem of Style in Realistic Representation: Marx and Flaubert. In The Concept of Style. B. Lang, ed. Pp. 213–229. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

———. 1980. The Value of Narrativity in the Representation of Reality. Critical Inquiry 7(1):5–27.

Winter, I. J. 1974. Review of H. A. Groenewegen-Frankfort, Arrest and Movement. Journal of the American Oriental Society 94:505–506.

———. 1977. Perspective on the "Local Style" of Hasanlu IVB: A Study in Receptivity. In Mountains and Lowlands: Essays in the Archaeology of Greater Mesopotamia. L. D. Levine and T. C. Young, Jr., eds. Pp. 371–386. Malibu, Calif.: Undena.

———. 1980. A Decorated Breastplate from Hasanlu, Iran: Type, Style and Context of an Equestrian Ornament. University Museum Monograph Series Vol. 37. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania.

———. Forthcoming. Art as Evidence for Interaction: Relations between the Assyrian Empire and North Syria as Seen from Their Art. In Mesopotamien und seine Nachbarn (XXVe Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale). H. J. Nissen and J. Renger, eds. Berlin.

Wobst, H. M. 1977. Stylistic Behavior and Information Exchange. In For the Director: Research Essays in Honor of James B. Griffin. E. Cleland, ed. Pp. 317–342. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Museum of Anthropology.

Figure 1. Plan, Northwest Palace of Assurnasirpal II, Nimrud. (Adapted from Mallowan 1966 and Abu es-Soof 1963).
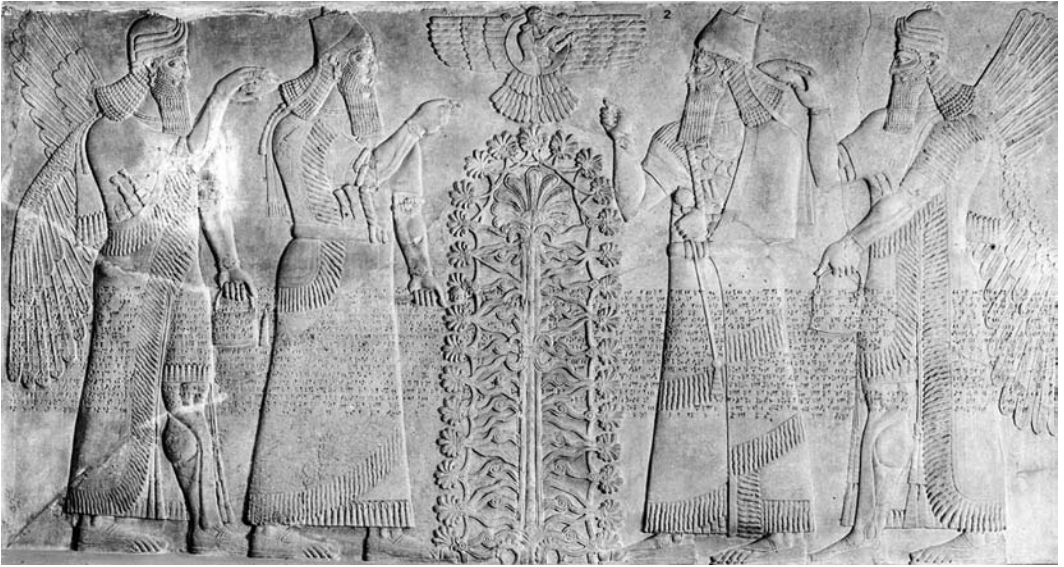
Figure 3. Room B, Slab 23: King and sacred tree (British Museum 124531).

Figure 4. B19a: Lion hunt (British Museum 124534).

Figure 5. B19b: Libation over lion (British Museum 124535).

Figure 6. B18a: Siege of citadel (British Museum 124536).

Figure 7. B17a: Citadel in river (British Museum 124538).

Figure 8. B18b: Submissive king (British Museum 124537).

Figure 9. B17b: Prisoners and booty (British Museum 124539, detail).

Figure 10. B4a: Chariot siege (British Museum 124553).

Figure 11. Altar of Tukulti Ninurta I, Middle Assyrian period, ca. 1225 B.C.,
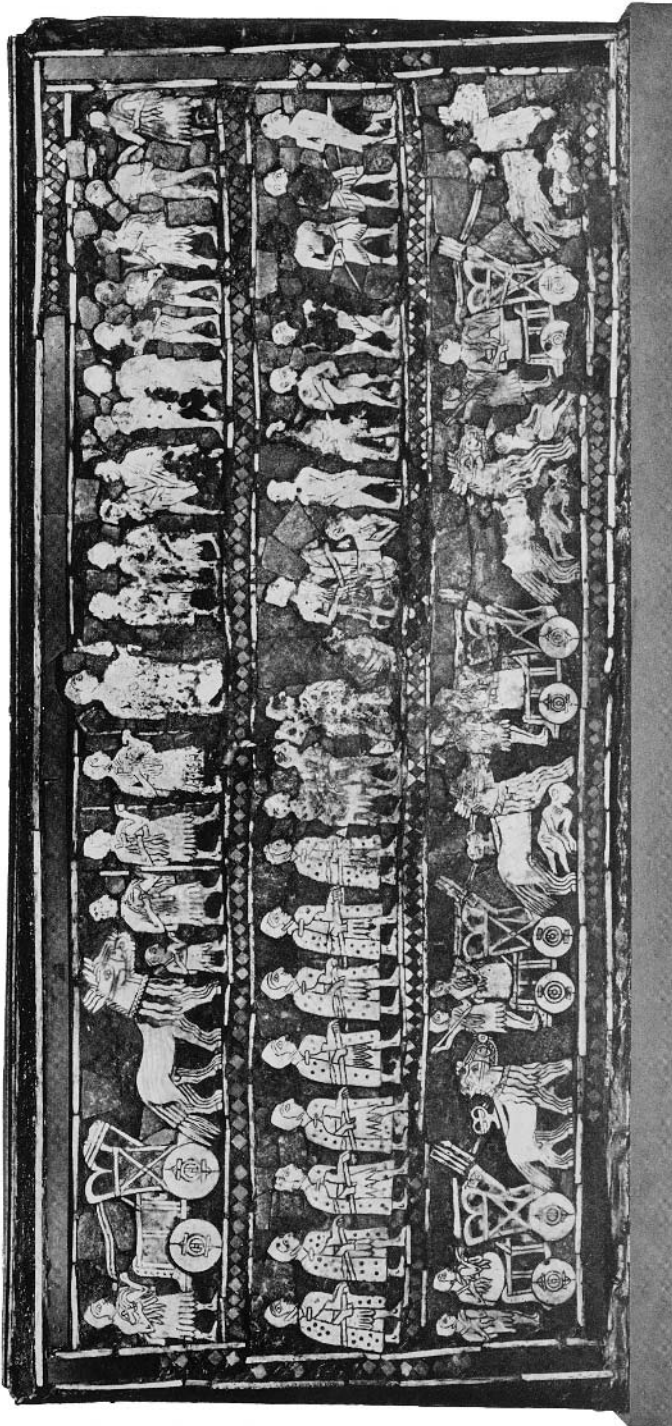Assur (Staatliche Museen, Berlin, VA 8146, 8227; ht. 57.5 cm.).

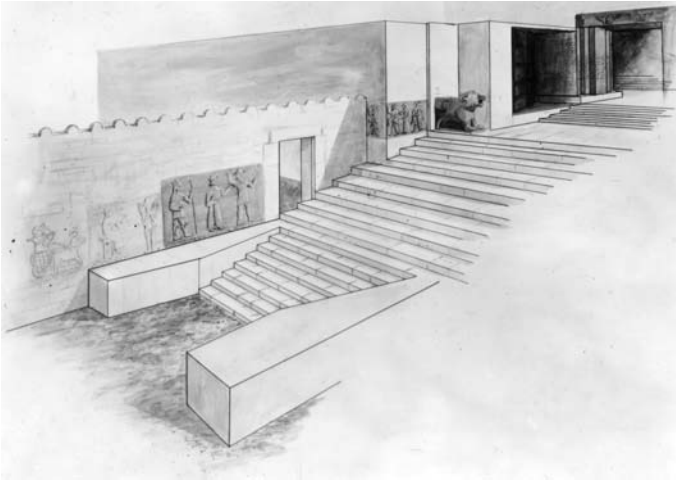Figure 12. Standard of Ur, Early Dynastic period, ca. 2500 B.C. (British Museum 121201; 20.3 × 48.3 cm.).

Figure 13. B27b: Pursuit of horsemen (British Museum 124559).

Figure 14. Stele of Naram Sin, Akkad period, ca. 2230 B.C., found at Susa
(Musée du Louvre Sb 4; ht. 2 m.).

Figures 15a & b. Carchemish, Long Wall (a) reconstructed drawing; (b) chariot relief (Archaeological Museum, Ankara, Inv. 94; ht. 2 m.).

Figure 16. Court D, Northwest Palace: Tributary figures (British Museum
124562).
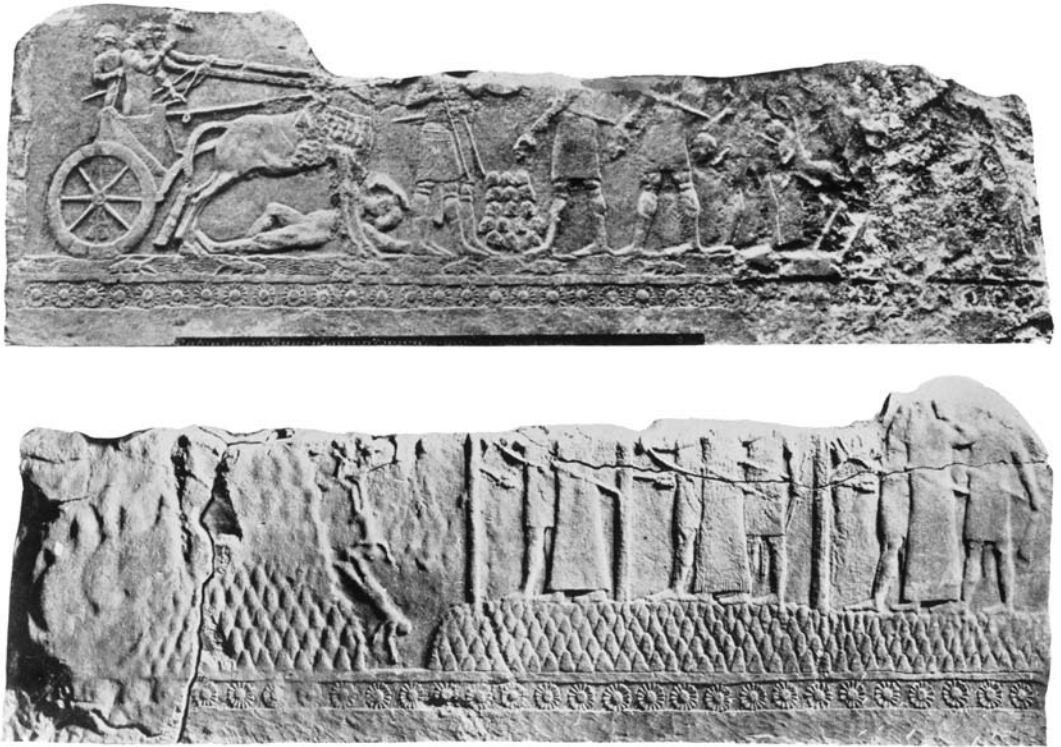
Figure 17. Sargon II Throne-base, Room VII, Khorsabad (top: northeast side, Iraq Museum; bottom: southwest side, Oriental Institute, Chicago, A 11257).
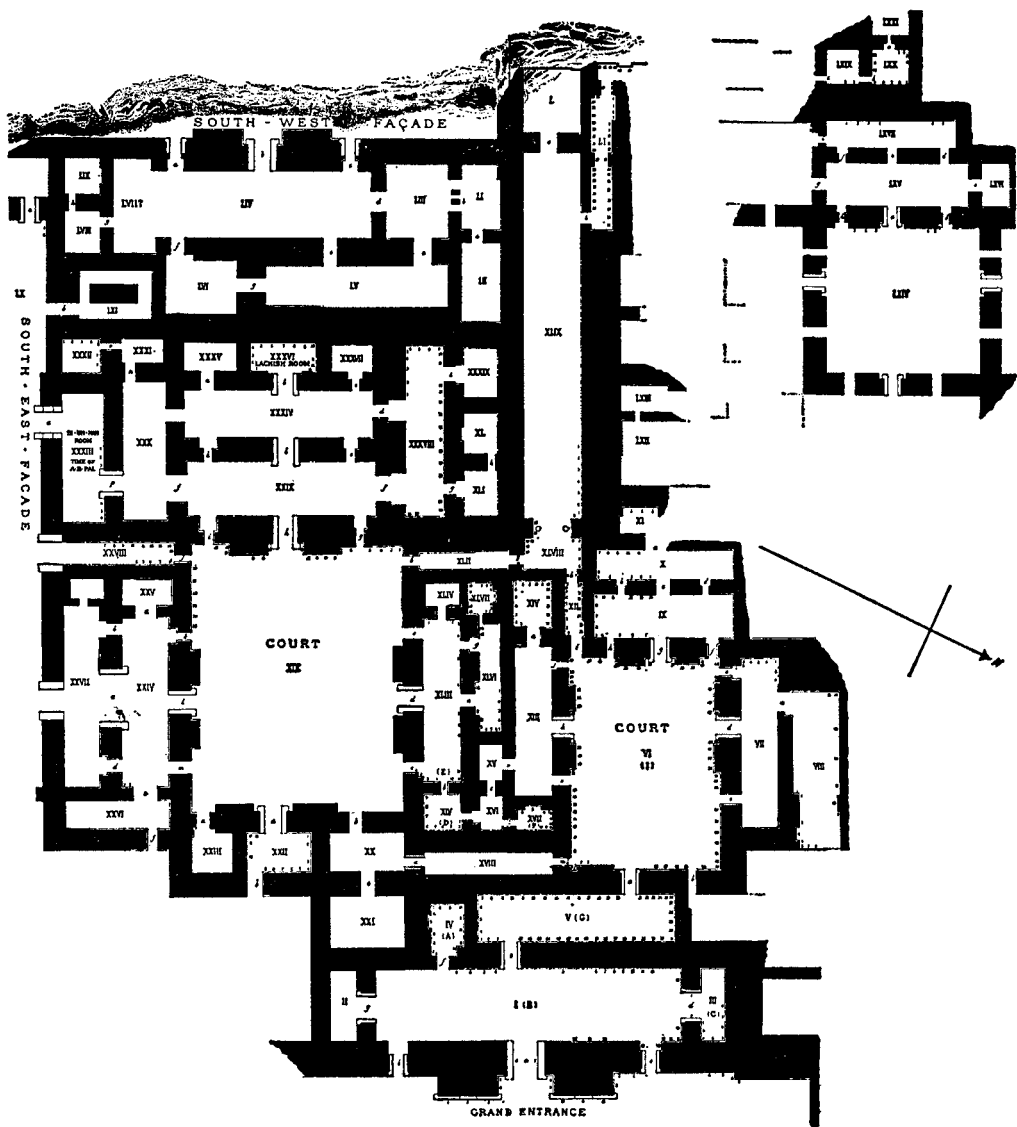
Figure 18. Plan, Southwest Palace of Sennacherib, Nineveh. (After Paterson 1915.)

Figures 19a & b. (a) Shalmaneser III, Black Obelisk, Nimrud (British Museum 118885; ht. 2.02 m.); (b) detail.

Figure 20. Shalmaneser III, Bronze door band, Balawat (British Museum, ht. 27 cm.).

Figure 21. Sennacherib, Siege of Lachish, Room XXXVI, Southwest Palace, Nineveh (British Museum).

Figure 22. Assurbanipal, Arab campaign, Room L, North Palace, Nineveh
(British Museum 124926).

Figure 23. Assurbanipal, Lion hunt/libation, Room S', North Palace, Nineveh
(British Museum 124886–7).

Figure 24. Assurbanipal, Ulai river campaign, Room XXXIII, Southwest
Palace of Sennacherib, Nineveh (British Museum 128802).

CHAPTER TWO

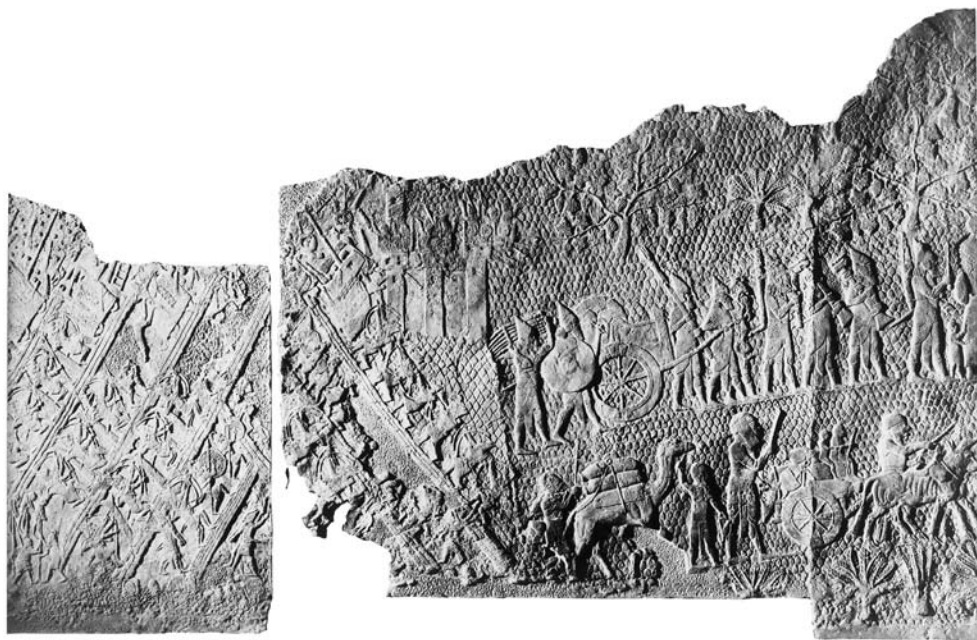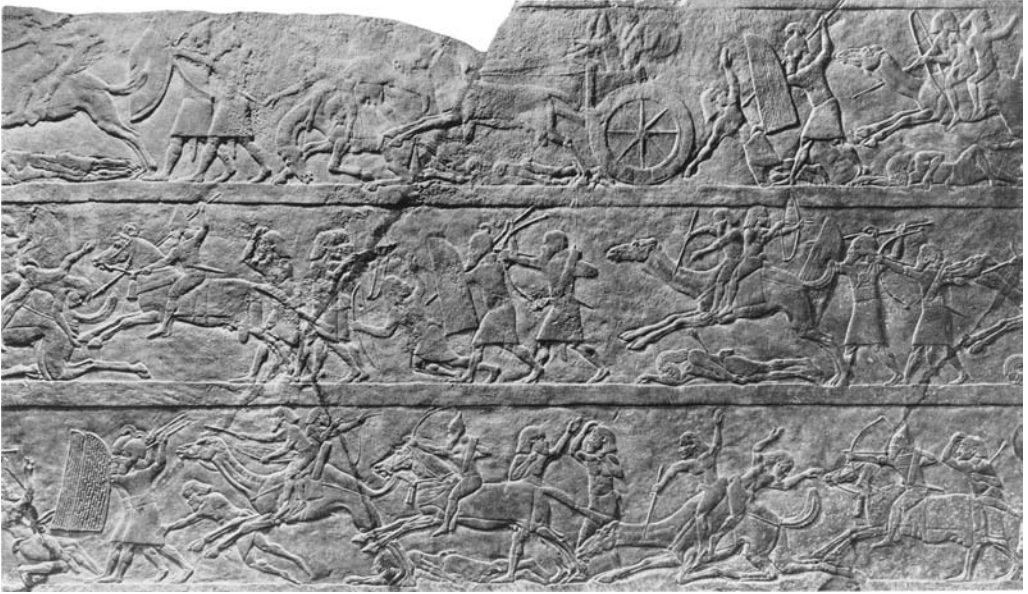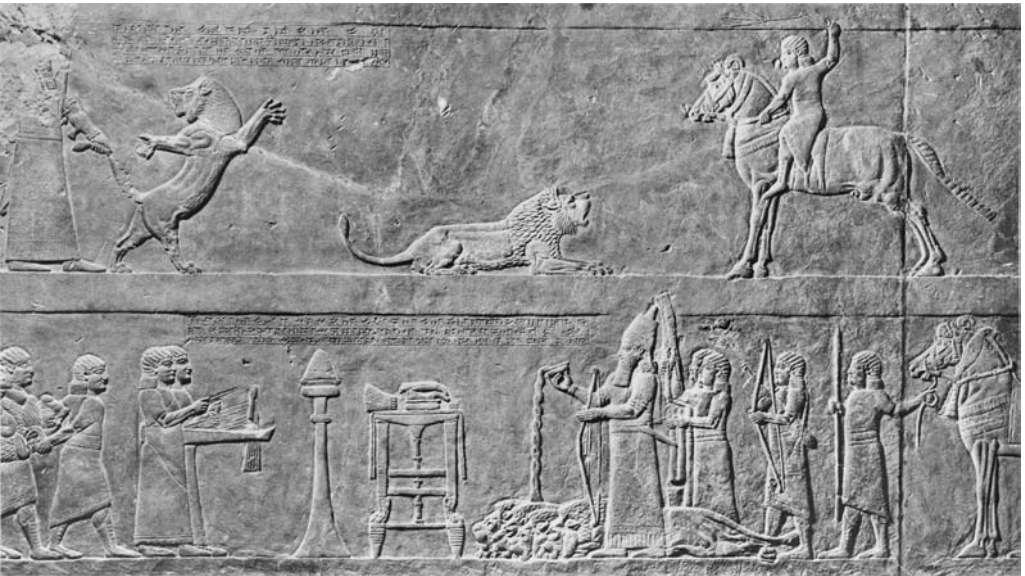# ART *IN* EMPIRE: THE ROYAL IMAGE AND THE VISUAL DIMENSIONS OF ASSYRIAN IDEOLOGY

As we celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, it is important to note that studies in the visual arts of Assyria have also come a long way in the past ten years. The primary publications of the Assyrian marbles over the past century and a half have set the stage for the current crop of work, bringing the texts to bear directly on the visual record.[1] Indeed, it may be observed that the texts are no longer the exclusive domain of historians and philologists, while the images are equally no longer the exclusive domain of archaeologists and art historians. What has been amply demonstrated over the past 25 years, and especially in the past ten, is, on the one hand, that one simply cannot look at the verbal domains of information and not include the visual in the larger universe of cultural communication; and, on the other hand, that one cannot restrict study of the visual to merely

---

[1] For the primary publications, see from A. H. Layard, *The Monuments of Nineveh*, London 1848 and *A Second Series of the Monuments of Nineveh* (London, 1857) and P. E. Botta and M. E. Flandin, *Monuments de Nineve* (Paris, 1849) to J. B. Stearns, *Reliefs from the Palace of Ashurnasirpal II* [AfO Beiheft 15] (Graz, 1961), R. D. Barnett and M. Falkner, *The Sculptures of Assurnasirpal II, Tiglath Pileser III and Esarhaddon from the Central and S.W. Palaces at Nimrud* (London, 1962), Barnett, *Sculptures from the North Palace of Assurbanipal at Nineveh* (London, 1977) and the several publications of J. Meuszynski, S. M. Paley and R. Sobolewski of the reliefs of the Northwest Palace at Nimrud, published in the series *Baghdader Forschungen*, 1981, 1987, 1992.

For later studies that brought textual evidence to bear on the reliefs, see J. E. Reade, "Sargon's Campaigns of 720, 716 and 715 B.C.: Evidence from the Sculptures," *JNES* 35 (1976), 95–104, "Narrative Composition in Assyrian Sculpture," *Bagh. Mitt.* 10 (1979), 52–110, "Neo-Assyrian Monuments in their Historical Context," in F. Fales, ed., *Assyrian Royal Inscriptions: New Horizons* (Rome, 1981) 143–67, and "Texts and Sculptures from the North-West Palace, Nimrud," *Iraq* 47 (1985), 203ff., among many others; J.-M. Durand, "Texte et image a l'époque néo-assyrienne," in *Dire, voir, écrire: le texte et l'image*, *34–44* (1979–80), 15–22; I. Winter, "Royal Rhetoric and the Development of Historical Narrative in Neo-Assyrian Reliefs," *Studies in Visual Communication 7* (1981), 2–38; L. Bachelot, "La fonction des reliefs néo-assyriens," in D. Charpin and F. Joannès, eds., *Marchands, diplomates et empereurs. Etudes en honneur de Paul Garelli* (Paris, 1991), 109–28.

establishing chronology and articulating formal properties. Rather, the
visual domain contains within it primary information, as well as unique
structures of knowledge—oftentimes in parallel or complementary with,
occasionally even quite distinct from, the textual record. Consequently,
the visual needs to be studied with the full analytical arsenal available
to us—art historical, archaeological, anthropological, and textual—and
on its own terms.[2]

The signs for the future are good. There is a new crop of students
at work on dissertations in both the visual and the textual/historical
field, whose studies depend both on language and visual analysis, such
that we may be optimistic about progress in probing the role of and
the meaning contained in the Assyrian visual record. And that, of
course, is the message: that, in order to progress, students of art his-
tory and archaeology must be adequately trained in language, just as
students of history and philology must equally be adequately trained
in archaeology and analysis of the visual, so as not to use materials

---

[2] In the productive methodological cross-overs these last ten years have witnessed, I
cite but a few of the more recent scholars working in the field: first, John Russell has
made use of the textual record in his initial study of the palace reliefs of Sennach-
erib—particularly the combination of domestic internal building projects and foreign
policy contained in the decorative program of the major courtyard VI (see J. M.
Russell, "Bulls for the Palace and Order in the Empire: The Sculptural Program of
Sennacherib's Court VI at Nineveh," *Art Bulletin* 49 (1987), 519–37 and *Sennacherib's
Palace without a Rival at Nineveh* (Chicago, 1991), and he will soon publish a study of
all of the places, e.g., threshholds and doorway sculptures, where inscriptions were
placed in the Assyrian palace, suggesting that the texts participated as much as the
imagery in the powerful visual *display* of the royal buildings—cf. *The Writing on the
Wall....* (Eisenbrauns, in press); second, Michelle Marcus in her work on Neo-Assyr-
ian geography, investigates the role played by representations of terrain in articulating
a Neo-Assyrian rhetoric of rule through metaphors of topographical mastery and
possession (M. I. Marcus, "Geography as an Organizing Principle in the Imperial Art
of Shalmaneser III," *Iraq* 49 (1987), 77–90, and more recently, "Geography as Visual
Ideology: Landscape, Knowledge, and Power in Neo-Assyrian Art," in M. Liverani,
ed., *Assyrian Geography* (Rome, in press); third, Barbara N. Porter has made use of the
visual record in elucidating the reign and times of Esarhaddon and other Assyrian
rulers—particularly as Assyrian rulers consciously used imagery along with texts to
address their audiences (see B. N. Porter, unpublished paper, "Ceremony and Power:
Royal Basket-bearing in the Reigns of Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal;" and "Sacred
Trees, Date Palms and the Royal Persona of Ashurnasirpal II," *JNES* 52 (1993),
129–39); fourth, Pamela Gerardi has worked on how the small captions known as
epigraphic texts function when they are included as part of the narrative scenes on
reliefs (P. Gerardi, "Epigraphs and Assyrian Palace Reliefs: The Development of the
Epigraphic Text," *JCS* 40 (1988), 1–35).

merely as illustrations of what is already known from the texts but rather as primary documents.[3]

Throughout all of this recent work, one of the principal issues has been the relationship between text and image—both the texts carved directly upon reliefs (fig. 1) and those historical and annalistic texts that occur independently but whose contents relate directly to the iconographic program of palace decoration. What has emerged is at times clear parallels, both structural and in content, between the texts and the visual content of the reliefs; and on other occasions, important complementarity, such that texts and images combine to constitute a more complete message than either would provide on its own.

However texts and visual imagery may be seen to relate to the literate consumer, the importance of the visual in a largely non-literate society should not be underestimated. While the captions written directly on the reliefs help focus attention at crucial moments in the visual narra-tive, it is still possible, without being able to read the text, to decipher a good deal of the "message" of Assyrian decorative schemes from the imagery alone. A similar situation must have pertained in the European Middle Ages, when didactic messages from biblical stories were deployed over the exterior of the great urban cathedrals for public instruction, such that they were subsequently referred to as "the people's book in stone." Another similar situation pertains with respect to the decorative programs of Hindu temples, where we know—because there is a living practice available to us—that the pious visitor is expected to take in the program of sculptural decoration. In fact, as part of preparation

---

[3] A few of the recent dissertations in the field of Neo-Assyrian *art history* illustrate my point, as they contribute to an understanding of Assyrian *history* as well. Megan Cifarelli, 1994 PhD. from Columbia University, for example, whose thesis is entitled: "Enmity, Alienation and Assimilation: The Role of Cultural Difference in the Expansion of Assyrian Ideology"—shows how the crushed and humiliated enemy of Assurnasirpal become negative tropes in opposition to the upright, victorious ruler. Ann Shafer, Har-vard University, in her thesis on "Monuments as Theological Creation: Neo-Assyrian Stelae and Rock Reliefs of the First Millennium B.C."—proposes that center-periphery issues are worked out through the ceremonial marking of boundaries throughout the Neo-Assyrian period of military expansion. And Jülide Aker, Harvard University, in her thesis "Transgression as Rhetoric in the Palace Reliefs of Assurbanipal," will argue that the lion-hunts and the battle narratives of Assurbanipal both expand the narrative field and also reflect the complexity of late Assyrian relations with Babylonia. Meanwhile, from the textual field, Elnathan Weissert, Hebrew University, through his edition of the Assurbanipal texts relating to the lion hunt, has been able to explain a number of features in the reliefs, as well as to posit that the text preserved on a Nineveh tablet was most likely itself a copy of the very inscription on the stele depicted in one of the reliefs (see his paper in this volume, pp. 339–58).

for direct audience with the deity resident inside the temple, one first circumambulates the temple and absorbs the visual referents, in order to focus on the various attributes of the deity prior to worship—presumably having recourse to associations and narratives already existing in the mind.

Throughout the period of decorated Assyrian palaces, from Assurnasirpal II in the 9th century B.C. to Assurbanipal in the 7th, the relationship between text and image functioned in a variety of ways.[4] First, text can be incorporated physically *onto* the palace reliefs. For Assurnasirpal, it consists of what is known as the Standard Inscription: an abbreviated statement, repeated over each and every slab, that included the name and titles of the ruler, the major military triumphs of his reign, and the fact of his having constructed this palace in a new capital (for example, see fig. 2). For Tiglath Pileser III and Sargon II in the 8th century, excerpts of more extensive display or annalistic texts are inscribed across several slabs, set in bands separating narrative panels above and below (e.g., fig. 3). And for a number of rulers from Tiglath Pileser on, "captions" are added directly to the narratives to focus attention upon specific aspects of the scene: identification of a specific site or more elaborate explication of a particular event (as, for example, in figs. 1, 4 and 5).

Second, more complete, often annalistic, texts—as, for example, Assurnasirpal's from the Ninurta Temple adjacent to the royal palace, as well as texts on other monuments like gateway colossi or royal monoliths—lie *behind* the depictions. These texts, when read or recalled in conjunction with the palace reliefs, provide detailed information about the king's military campaigns being represented. While much of the language describing military campaigns is formulaic, it is still possible to ascertain that some scenes carved on reliefs—for example, in the throneroom of Assurnasirpal's Northwest Palace—refer not merely to generic "hunts" or "battles," but rather to specific events, since the topographical elements and other details represented correspond closely

---

[4] For Assurnasirpal II, see, for example, Winter, *Studies in Visual Communication 7* (1981), cited above, and "The Program of the Throneroom of Assurnasirpal II at Nimrud," in P. O. Harper and H. Pittman, eds., *Essays on Near Eastern Art and Archaeology in Honor of Charles Kyrle Wilkinson* (New York, 1983), 15–31, along with the subsequent discussions in Reade, *Iraq* 47 and Bachelot, *Marchands, diplomates et empereurs*, cited above. For the later rulers, see Reade, *JNES* 35, and Gerardi, *JCS* 40, cited above.

to non-formulaic elements in the verbal descriptions.[5] In this way, to
the initiated, the reliefs would have functioned rather like modern
news photographs of actual military campaigns, as can be seen in the
gazeteers of many recent wars; but it should also be stressed that the
Assyrians naturalized their victories by the exercise of editorial privilege,
since on the reliefs the Assyrians are depicted as always victorious and
the enemy as always vanquished.

Third, there can be a more direct typological relationship between
text and image, as when the attributes of Assurnasirpal II as contained
in his regular titulary correspond directly to the four types of images
of the king used in the throneroom—assumedly the most important
chamber in the palace. Thus, in the Standard Inscription written
directly upon the relief slabs, as well as in the king's Ninurta Temple
inscriptions, he is called, in sequence: "attentive prince, worshipper of
the Great Gods, ferocious predator, conqueror of cities and the entire
highlands."[6] I have argued in another context that the representation
of the king with a bowl at the far end of the throneroom, engaged in
what I believe to be an act of rendering judgment, serves as the visual
counterpart to the first, "attentive prince;" the image directly behind
the throne dais and opposite the main doorway, where we see the king
participating in the ritual fructification of the "sacred tree" (fig. 2), pro-
vides the visualisation of the second, "keeper of the gods"; the hunt
scenes from the corner of the throneroom nearest the throne dais, where
the king takes on wild bulls and lions, demonstrates the power of the
king as "fierce predator," with the Assyrian adjective for "fierce," *ekdu*,
otherwise used *only* for lions and bulls, thereby demonstrating that the
king is *even more fierce* than the animals he dominates; and finally, the
multiple battle scenes, in which the king is always shown as victorious,
become the visual equivalent of the ruler's claim to be the "conqueror
of cities and the highlands."[7] These four pair-bonds represent a single
case of the parallelism of verbal epithets or titles in text and motifs in

---

[5] Scholars often disagree on the specific equivalences between battle reliefs and actual
campaigns, however: compare, for example, Winter, *Studies in Visual Communications 7*,
Reade, *Iraq* 47, and Marcus, in *Assyrian Geography* (in press).

[6] A. K. Grayson, *Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia 2: Assyrian Rulers of the Early First
Millennium*, Toronto 1991, ANP II.A.0.101.1, line 126 (Ninurta temple annalistictext);
A.0.101.17, lines 12–13 (Ninurta temple stele); A.0.101.23, line 12 (Standard Inscrip-
tion): NUN *na-a-dupa-líḫ* DINGIR.MEŠ GAL.MEŠ *ú-šúm-gal-lu ek-du ka-šid* URU. URU *u ḫur-šá-ni
paṭ gim-ri-šú-nu.*

[7] Winter, *Studies in Visual Communication 7*, p. 21.

imagery in the early Neo-Assyrian period; it would be interesting to see
if such parallels could be demonstrated in later reigns as well.

Fourth and last, an even more fundamental relationship can be
demonstrated between the structural organization of visual narrative
and the structural organization of the Semitic Neo-Assyrian Akkadian
language. In Akkadian, fixed word order follows the pattern, different
from English, of Subject-Object-Verb—that is, subject of sentence
first, then the object of the sentence, followed by the verb. Thus, in
Akkadian, *king-citadel-conquers*; and so also, in virtually all of the battle
scenes, the king is seen at the left, facing toward and/or engaged in
warfare against the citadel against which he campaigns, and only at the
end, as prisoners are led off, does one "read" the conclusion that the
king has indeed conquered the citadel. This reading holds equally true
for the reliefs of later Assyrian kings of the 8th and 7th centuries B.C.,
such as those of Tiglath-pileser III and Sennacherib, where prisoners
and animals taken as booty are brought out of a captured city to the
right-hand side of the main battle. In the well-known sequence of the
siege of Lachish, from Room 36 of Sennacherib's Southwest Palace at
Nineveh, the approaching Assyrian army moves through time as well
as space, left to right, to attack the fortified city, and only at the end
are the prisoners and booty presented before the enthroned king, duly
labeled by an epigraphic text (fig. 4).[8] By the time of Assurbanipal, the
narrative is so complex that it is intended to be read across three registers
at once, as in the king's Arab campaigns, or else across and around the
visual field of several contiguous slabs, as in the Ulai River battle, with
only the captions to orient the sequence of reading (fig. 5).[9]

In the case of royal palace reliefs, therefore, one may see text and
image as each functioning to augment the message of the other in a

---

[8] In addition to the narrative sequences of Assurnasirpal II, see, for example,
the siege scene and aftermath of Tiglath Pileser III in Barnett and Falkner, *Tiglath
Pileser III*, Pls. IV and VI; and for the Sennacherib sequence, see now J. M. Russell,
"Sennacherib's Lachish Narratives," in P. J. Holliday, ed., *Narrative and Event in Ancient
Art* (Cambridge, 1993), 55–73, along with D. Ussishkin, *The Conquest of Lachish by Sen-
nacherib* (Tel Aviv, 1982), reconstruction drawing, fig. 60, and diagram, fig. 61, which
place the reliefs in the room and on the axis of the doorway. It should be noted
that the same organizational pattern, with the citadel just opposite the doorway, and
approach-event-consequence wrapped around the room, is followed as well in Room
14 of the palace, in a campaign against Alammu (see Russell, *Sennacherib's 'Palace…'*,
Appendix 2, p. 282 and figs. 17, 18 and 121).
[9] Barnett, *North Palace*, Pl. XXXIII [= Room L, slabs 11–13] for the Arab campaign,
for example.

variety of ways and by a variety of referencing devices. What remains constant is the emphasis on the role and figure of the ruler throughout a variety of narrative and iconic representations: engaged in ritual practice, facing an enemy citadel or in the lead chariot of a campaign attack, overseeing the quarrying of colossal stone gateway figures. Even when the king was apparently not present on a given military campaign, as in the Ulai River battle mentioned above, it is still the king's person who dominates, and the king's voice that echos, both in text and in image, since the ultimate goal of the victory as depicted is the bringing of the captives, booty and the head of the defeated Elamite ruler back to the king in Nineveh.

For the purposes of the present paper, however, I would like to depart from the reliefs and explore some of the more ignored Neo-Assyrian royal works: the three-dimensional statues of kings—in order to consider how the Assyrians understood the phenomenon of the royal image *per se.* The sample includes figures of Assurnasirpal ıı (fig. 6) and his son, Shalmaneser ııı, along with one of Adad-nirari ııı; and to this group may be added the royal images of kings on free-standing stone stelae that seem to have been liberally distributed throughout the realm (e.g., figs. 7 and 12, from Nimrud/Calah and Zincirli/Sam'al, respectively).[10] These images are often excluded from scholarly attention by art historians in

---

[10] See, the catalogue in D. Morandi, "Stele e Statue reali assire: Localazione, diffusione e implicazione ideologiche," *Mesopotamia* 23 (1988), esp. 143–50. Of particular interest here is Assurnasirpal II's Ishtar Sharrat-niphi statue, BM 118871, found by Layard [published most recently in the catalogue of J. E. Curtis and J. E. Reade, eds., *Art and Empire: Treasures from Assyria in the British Museum* (New York, 1995), 43, with bibliography and for the text, see Grayson, *RIMA* 2, A. O. 101.39], and the statuary of Shalmaneser III: J. Læssøe, "A Statue of Shalmaneser III from Nimrud," *Iraq* 21 (1959), 147ff., and J. V. Kinnier-Wilson, "The Kurba'il Statue of Shalmaneser III," *Iraq* 24 (1962), 90ff. In addition to Morandi, the royal stelae have been treated in J. Börker-Klähn, *Altvorderasiatische Bildstelen und vergleichbare Felsreliefs* [Baghdader Forschungen 4] (Mainz, 1982), and H. Genge, *Stelen neuassyrischer Könige—eine Dokumentation und philogische Vorarbeit zur Würdigung einer archäologischen Denkmalergattung, Teil I: Die Keilinschriften*, PhD. Freiburg, 1965; the corpus will be examined further in the forthcoming thesis of Ann Shafer, cited above. For our purposes, see especially, Assurnasirpal's Banquet Stele, Ninurta Temple Stele, and Kurk monolith = Börker-Klähn, *Bildstelen*, Nos. 137, 136 and 135; texts = Grayson, *RIMA* 2, A.0.101.30, A.0.101. 17, and A.0.101.19; and see also representations of royal stelae in narrative reliefs: e.g., on the bronze gate-bands from Balawat of Shalmaneser III, where a stele is set up on the shores of Lake Van (illustrated in Börker-Klähn, *Bildstelen*, No. 146) or at the source of the Tigris (*ibid.*, No. 151), as well as on the stone relief of the North Palace of Assurbanipal at Nineveh, where a stele depicting the ruler is set on a hilltop in a local Assyrian park (our fig. 13, = Barnett, *North Palace*, Room H, slab 8, which Barnett, p. 41, suggests is located near either Nineveh or Arbela).

the face of the overwhelming achievement of the narrative reliefs, and by implicit negative comparison to "more successful" three-dimensional statuary—both earlier in the Mesopotamian sequence, like Gudea of Lagash, or in later Western art, based upon Greek models such as the early Classic Kritios boy. Nevertheless, I believe these Assyrian royal images contain within them—especially when they are viewed in conjunction with textual references to *representation per se*—vital information about the iconography of rule and the ideology of empire.

   Such an analysis requires close attention to the words the Assyrians themselves used to refer to images, and is part of a larger study on Mesopotamian visual aesthetics in general.[11] First, the Akkadian word for image, itself: *ṣalmu*. A recent study by Daniele Morandi of Assyrian royal stelae and statuary has followed very similar lines to my own, in making clear that the way in which the word has been translated (as, for example, in the Chicago Assyrian Dictionary) is less than desirable.[12] The term is generally said to "mean" variously statue, sculpture, relief, painting, or metal engraving, depending upon the context. But no, the word means, consistently and only, image, which then may occur as a statue, or on a stele, carved in relief, painted, drawn or engraved. The term is often put together with the Akkadian word for king: *šarru*, to form the expression, "image of the king," or "image of (my) kingship," *ṣalam šarrūtiya*—literally, "image of my kingly self," or better, "image in my (office of) kingship." In such cases, unless an inscription occurs upon an object *per se*, or the type of object (for example, a stele) is named or adequate context provided in the text to suggest the type of object, there is simply no way to know whether the *ṣalam šarrūtiya* refers to a three-dimensional or a two-dimensional image.[13]

---

[11] A first installment has appeared as "Aesthetics in Ancient Mesopotamian Art," in J. Sasson, ed., *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East*, Vol. IV, (New York, 1995), 2569–2580. For the rationale of using the Assyrians own lexicon, see also P. Machinist, "Assyrians on Assyria in the First Millennium B.C.," in K. Raaflaub and E. Müller-Luckner, eds., *Anfänge politische Denkens in der Antike: Die nahöstlichen Kulturen und die Griechen* (Munich, 1993), 77–104.

[12] See discussions in I. J. Winter, "'Idols of the King'; Royal Images as Recipients of Ritual Action in Ancient Mesopotamia," *Journal of Ritual Studies 6* (1992), 36, n. 5 and in Morandi, *Mesopotamia* 23, 105–106.

[13] See, for example, in the Ninurta Temple inscription, when Assurnasirpal II describes the setting up of images in conquered cities (Grayson, *RIMA* 2, ANP II.A.0.101.1, lines 97–98, in Laqê (*ṣa-lam* MAN-*ti-ia...*DÙ-*uš*) and line 105, at the source of the river Subnat (*ṣa-lam* MAN-*ti-ia ab-ni...ú-še-zi-iz*). For this last, contra Grayson's translation, one can conjecture that he was referring to a stele rather than to a statue, because his son, Shalmaneser III, depicts a stele bearing his own image in process of being carved at the source of the Tigris on one of the bronze bands from Balawat

Assyrian kings quite frequently refer in their texts to the commissioning of their own images. When a text of the 7th century ruler Esarhaddon recounts that he had such an image of himself made of silver, gold and copper, we can be relatively certain from the materials named, even if the statue itself no longer exists and the text occurs on a clay tablet, that the work referred to was a three-dimensional figure.[14] By contrast, when Assurnasirpal II refers to "this image" (*ṣalmu šuātu*) in a text inscribed directly upon his Great Monolith,[15] where there is indeed an image of the king depicted in two-dimensional relief, we can be pretty certain that the reference is to the immediate two-dimensional relief figure on the stele. And when a letter to Sargon II from the Governor of Amidi states that the official has built a royal palace and "drawn the king's image inside it" (ALAM LUGAL *ina* ŠÀ-*bi e-te-ṣir*), we can infer from the context that the writer refers to relief or, more likely, painting as part of the palace decoration, not unlike the painted images of Tiglath Pileser III in the Governor's Palace at Til Barsib.[16]

Insisting upon a limited meaning of the term *ṣalmu* yet its wide application in a variety of media may actually help in understanding the power of imagery in general. Such a view is consistent with a rather radical reading of the stele upon which was inscribed the well-known collection of the Laws of Hammurabi, king of Babylon some 1000 years before the Neo-Assyrian period (fig. 8). In the epilogue of the text written on the stele, we are told that the laws were "set up before my image (as) 'king of justice'" (*ina maḫar ṣalmiya šar mīšarim*).[17] Because until recently it has been possible to think of a *ṣalmu* as literally meaning a three-dimensional statue, scholars have proposed all sorts of awkward solutions for this phrase, such as that there must have been

---

(see reference in note 10, above). On the Ninurta Temple *stele*, when the king at the end curses anyone who would not care for his image in the future, it is clear by his choice of words, ALA[M-*i*]*a šu-a-tú*, that what he means is "my *this* image," hence the stele itself (*ibid.*, A.0.101.17, lines 96–97). On an Assurbanipal tablet, the distinction is clear, since a stele (*narû*) is said to have been made upon which an image (*ṣalam-*) of the great gods was drawn (Streck, *ABP*, 270, v.2, cited in CAD E:331, *esēqu*).

[14] See Thompson, Es. 16 iii 49.

[15] Grayson, *RIMA* 2:253 = ANP II A.0.101.17, col. v, 11. 56ff.

[16] G. B. Lanfranchi and S. Parpola, *Correspondence of Sargon II, Pt. II: Letters from Northern and Northeastern Provinces* [SAA V] (Helsinki, 1990), no. 15 rev. 8–10; F. Thureau-Dangin and M. Dunand, *Til Barsib* (Paris, 1936), Pl. XLIX.

[17] See now, Martha T. Roth, *Law Collections from Mesopotamia and Asia Minor* [Writings from the Ancient World 6] (Atlanta, 1995), pp. 133–34 = § XLVII: "my pronouncements I have inscribed upon my stele," *ina narîa ašṭurma*, and *ina maḫar ṣalmiya šar mīšarim ukīn*; also, § XLVIII: "a wronged man…may come before my image (as) 'king of justice,'" *ana maḫar ṣalmiya šar mīšarim lillikma*, "(and) let my stele reveal…."

a physical statue of Hammurabi in front of which the stele containing the laws would have been placed. However, if instead one understands the Akkadian *ina maḫar* as equally able to mean "in the presence of," used in legal texts to refer to witnesses, just as the verb *kunnu* also has the sense of something confirmed, certified or established by means of witnesses,[18] and further understands that *ṣalmu* can refer to any image, then *the text could as well be refering to the imagery on the stele itself.* In that scene, the king receives the mandate of the sun-god, Shamash, the deity associated with justice, which then enables him to propound the laws below and render just decisions. As such, the scene corresponds exactly to the text's description of the image of the king as *šar mīšarim.* The reference to the laws being set up "in the presence of" the king's image would then describe their immediately proximate relationship to the imagery in the stele's upper field—the privileged position in Babylonian and Assyrian art. The text would then better be read, however awkwardly: "…I have inscribed my word (i.e., the laws) upon my stele (and) established/confirmed/certified it by (i.e., through the witnessing presence of) my image (as) 'king of justice.'"

This reading of the Hammurabi stele is supported by Assurnasirpal II's use of the term *ṣalmu* (written logographically as ALAM) when referring to the Ninurta Temple stele as a whole, despite its combination of image and text;[19] and with this reading, what we as viewers get from the textual reference in the epilogue is the legitimating function of the image: in short, the sense that the image is sufficiently charged with power—since, by the performative act of representation it demonstrates the authority of the king to render good judgment on behalf of the god associated with judgment—that it serves to confirm the authority of the specific laws propounded on the stele below.

The stele of Hammurabi thus helps to underscore the power that imagery was considered to have in ancient Mesopotamia. The importance of royal imagery to the Assyrians, particularly to the ruler, is further suggested by a letter to a later Assyrian king, probably Esarhaddon—one of the texts being prepared for publication as part of the Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project—in which the king is

---

[18] It was a comment of Jo Renger's after my talk in Helsinki that provided the initial help in this reading; I am grateful to him and to Peter Machinist for its development. See CAD K: 168–69, *kânu*; also, discussion by E. T. Mullen, Jr., "Witness," in K. van der Toorn et al., eds., *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible* (Leiden, 1995), 1703, re the usage in ancient Near Eastern treaties of the phrase *ina* IGI PNs (plural)…, "before witnesses."

[19] Grayson, *RIMA* 2:254 = ANP II A.0.101.17, col. v, line 96.

shown to have been actively engaged in determining how he is to be represented.[20] The letter, from one Nabû-ašared, speaks of a "drawing" (presumably on papyrus or on a clay tablet) of an image of the king (*ṣalam* LUGAL) presented for royal appraisal before the final work is to be executed. It then goes on to criticize an alternate version of the king's image being offered by unnamed others, requesting that the ruler pay particular attention to the hands, chin and hair; and it ends by asking the king himself to decide which image is to be executed.

Similar conditions are described in the well-known letter of the *šatammu* of Esagila in Babylon to Esarhaddon, published by Benno Landsberger, in which the high priest of the temple of Marduk, Šum-iddina, speaks of the delivery of royal images from a responsible official named Mar-Ishtar. The high priest goes on to present the options available to the king, and, once again, requests that the king make his selection of the image-type to be installed.[21]

These two letters advance the discussion considerably. Although incompletely understood, they both clearly refer to competing versions of a royal image. In the first instance, only one of the possible images has been drawn by the correspondent, who then proceeds to describe specific aspects of the alternative rendering and articulate his own disapproval of it.[22] In the second, the choice presented to Esarhaddon is apparently between the better of the new images delivered by the official, Mar-Ishtar (again, presumably sent to the king as a model or drawing) and an image like one already installed in the temple of Marduk in Assur.[23]

To the extent that the king is asked in both cases to review the options and make the final selection, the king may be said to have exercised visual control over his own image. He will presumably have applied criteria of judgment and taste entirely consistent with a complex

---

[20] = ABL 991 + 1051 = K 1268 +Sm. 488 = CT 53 41. My thanks to Simo Parpola and to Karen Radner for having provided me with transliterations and translations of the letter in question.

[21] B. Landsberger, *Brief des Bischofs von Esagila an König Asarhaddon* [Mededelingen der Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen, Vol. 28, No. 6], (Amsterdam, 1965), lines 10–25.

[22] = ABL 991 + 1051, obv. 14–15: *ṣal-mu* LUGAL *ša mi-ṣi-ri a-na-ku e-te-ṣi-ri*, "the image of the king as a drawing [Radner: as an outline] (which) I drew" (text cited also in CAD Ṣ:83, *ṣalmu* b) 1'). Then, rev. 2–8: "regarding the statue of the king which *they* will make (emphasis ours).....," *a-na-ku* TA *pa-ni la ma-gu-ru la e-pa-aš*, "I myself do not agree with this; I do not want to make it." Barnett also cited this letter—cf. *North Palace*, p. 36.

[23] Landsberger, *BBEA*, lines 21–25: LUGAL *li-mur-ma ki-i pa-an* LUGAL EN-*iá maḫ-ru* ŠÀ-*bu-šú li-iz-zi u ki-i pa-an* LUGAL *la maḫ-ru* ŠÀ-*bu-u* ALAM *šá* LUGAL EN-*ia ú-še-bi-la li-iz-zi.*

notion of the relationship between representation and intention. What is more, to the extent that the official writing to the king has his own set of criteria, specific "ideas" of representation lie behind decisions concerning the making of images in general. Indeed, in the letter of Nabû-ašared, he complains to the king: "when I talk to them (the other artisans) about the features (i.e., appearance) (of the statue)…they do not listen to me,"[24] which further indicates that there could be divergences of opinion and strong preferences regarding issues of representation. The letter of the priest Šum-iddina in Babylon is more subtle, but possibly equally insinuating; for one possible reading of the options offered to the king is that although another official has proferred an acceptable (lit. "perfect") image, IF it is not pleasing to the king, he can, as an alternative, use as a model an image previously sent up to Assur by the priest himself, of which exemplars have already been installed elsewhere in Babylon as well!

The letter of Nabû-ašared introduces the term *būnu*, "features/appearance," which is but one of a number of words in the Assyrian lexicon that refer directly to the nature of the image in question, conveying the sense of "form," "features," "overall appearance," even "resemblance" or likeness (for example, *nabnītu* and *zīmu*).[25] Thus, Assurnasirpal II, for example, tells us that he made an image of himself of white limestone, on which he then inscribed praise of his own heroic deeds. He uses the words *ṣalam bunnannîya*, and from the Akkadian it seems clear he meant to indicate literally, "an image (having) my features/appearance."[26] In fact, he uses this formulation quite often, as does the later Assyrian king Sargon II of the 8th century, who pronounces a curse against anyone who would alter or damage his features (*ša…bunnannîya usaḫḫû*).[27]

Royal intention here seems clear: the kings seem to be striving to assert a visual relationship of likeness between themselves—their own physical persons—and the images that bear their names. This is emphasized even more strongly in the phrasing of another text of Assurnasirpal II, that on his Banquet Stele, found in an alcove of the courtyard leading

---

[24] = ABL 991 + 105 1, rev. 9–11: *ina* UGU *bu-un-ni ina* UGU *me-me-ni a-qa-ba-áš-šu-n[u l]a i-šam-mu-ni.*

[25] Thus, in Assurnasirpal's Sharrat-nipḫi temple lion inscription, Ishtar is described as one "whose form/appearance excels among (all) the goddesses," *ina ištarāti šūturat nabnīssa* (Grayson, *RIMA* 2:284 = ANP II.A.O. 101.28, col. i, line 2).

[26] Grayson, *RIMA* 2:291 = ANP II.A.O.101.30, line 76.

[27] Lyon, Sargon 12:76, 19:103, cited CAD B:318, *bunnannû.*

to the Throneroom of the Northwest Palace at Nimrud.[28] There, the text speaks specifically of a "royal image *like* (resembling) my (own) features," (*ṣalam šarrūtiya tamšil bunnannîya*).[29]

This vocabulary clearly engages our own artistic category of "portraiture," in which the finished image is judged in terms of whether it is or is not a good likeness of the original subject. It is certainly true that the image of Assurnasirpal on his stelae and in his free-standing statues is recognizable as *stylistically* similar to his images on the narrative reliefs (compare, for example, figs. 6, 7 and 10); but did he actually *look* like that? In Western art, when we speak of a "portrait," we rather expect that Benjamin West actually did look rather as John Singleton Copley painted him in the 18th century, or that Rembrandt at a certain stage of his life did look as he represented himself in a given self-portrait.[30] And yet, for all of the claims of the Assyrian rulers to "likeness," we do not really expect that the array of Assyrian royal sculpture represents accurate, realistic portrayals of the individual kings whose names they bear.

---

[28] D. J. Wiseman, "A new stele of Aššur-naṣir-pal II," *Iraq* 14 (1952), 24ff. (= Mosul Museum ND 1104).

[29] The text is published in Grayson, *RIMA* 2:291 = ANP II.A.0.101.30, line 76. Further evidence comes from the bilingual Assyrian-Aramaean inscription on an early first millennium statue from Tell Fakhariyeh, in which the Assyrian text makes three references to the statue as an image (Akk. *ṣalmu*) of the governor of Guzana, who has made the figure and set it up before his god, while the Aramaean version employs a comparable term (Aram. *ṣlm*) in one instance, but then uses another word signifying "likeness" (Aram, *dmwt*) in the other two—A. Abou-Assaf, P. Bordreuil and A. R. Millard, *La statue de Tell Fekherye* (Paris, 1982), line 12, then lines 1 and 5; and discussion by J.-G. Heintz, "La statue de Tell Fekherye," *IIIe Rencontre de l'Ecole du Louvre* (Paris, 1985), 89–106.

[30] See on this, R. Brilliant, *Portraiture*, Cambridge MA, 1991, esp. pp. 13–18, where the point is made that the fact of identification with a particular subject—whether by inscription ON the work or just general knowledge—automatically raises the issue of truthfulness of representation, due to the inevitable connection between the work and the person. In fact, we are so tied to the portrait format in the West that some Assyrian reliefs, when obtained for European and American collections, were cut down to conform to the standard proportions and size of Western portrait busts—as per two in the Kimball Art Museum of Fort Worth, Texas, and one in my own institution, the Harvard University Art Museums [this last is a relief that had been part of the estate of Lady Charlotte Guest, Layard's cousin and benefactress, to whom he gave a number of works (noted from a letter by John Russell to the curator in charge of the Ancient Art Department of the Harvard University Art Museums, 5 January 1996, regarding 1940.13, which is probably the first relief received by her as a gift, in the spring of 1848)]. In all three cases, winged genii from the Northwest Palace of Assurnasirpal have been cut down so that only the head, shoulders and part of the chest are preserved, the wings, torso and lower body clipped to create a "painting" in stone.

How, then, can we understand the Assyrians' claims to likeness, resemblance, appearance, and our own judgement of the images as idealized, undifferentiated, and fairly uniform?

A number of scholars, particularly Betty Schlossman and Agnès Spycket, have used the term "portrait" in connection with the entire sequence of Mesopotamian statuary, largely because the *identity* of the intended referent was known, although Schlossman was careful to distinguish Near Eastern examples from modern realism.[31] Still, both she and Spycket argue that as early as the later third millennium B.C., with the remarkably consistent images of Gudea of Lagash, of the late third millennium B.C., it was the particular royal physiognomy that inspired the resulting image, justifying the term "portrait."[32]

I find that I am only willing to employ the term with considerable redefinition, since it is really the occasional physiognomical "trait" in conjunction with idealized or generalized geometry that marked these images. Thus, Gudea's chin is common to all of his images, just as the nose of Nofar, an official of the Egyptian Old Kingdom, identifies him in both his Reserve Head and the reliefs of his tomb, the rest of the image being a typically canonical and idealized Egyptian image. I wonder, therefore, whether it might not be more useful to introduce a subset of the representational category "portrait" situated somewhere between idealization and realism, thereby allowing for specific physiognomic "signature elements" (like Gudea's chin), at the same time as more generic aspects of appearance were depicted.[33]

In the case of Assurnasirpal II of Assyria, in fact, not even an idiosyncratic chin separates his images from those of his son, Shalmaneser III. There are other aspects of Gudea that do bear comparison to the

---

[31] B. Schlossman, "Portraiture in Mesopotamia in the late 3rd and early 2nd Millennia B.C., Part I," *AfO* 26 (1978/9), 56–77, and ". . . , Part II," *AfO* 28 (1981/2), 143–70, especially *AfO* 26, 57; A. Spycket, *La statuaire du Proche-Orient ancien* (Leiden, 1981), 10–12, 194.

[32] This, in contrast to Gisela Richter (*The Portraits of the Greeks*, Ithaca 1984 [orig. New York 1965], pp. 24–25), who discusses early works but makes the point that before the Hellenistic period one should not expect to find physiological likeness in Greek sculpture, even when a particular individual is "named." More recent discussions of the issue include the essays in M. Kraatz et al., eds., *Das Bildnis in der Kunst des Orients* (Stuttgart, 1990), esp. those by Kraatz himself, "Religionswissenschaftliche Bemerkungen zur Porträtierbarkeit von 'Gott und Göttern,'" pp. 9–16; Jan Assmann, "Ikonologie der Identität: Vier Stilkategorien der altägyptischen Bildniskunst," pp. 17–44; and K. Otto-Dorn, "Das Islamische Herrscherbild im frühen Mittelalter," pp. 61–78.

[33] As discussed in I. J. Winter, Review of A. Spycket, *La statuaire du Proche-Orient ancien*, in *JCS* 36 (1984), 102–14.

statues of Assurnasirpal, however. The powerfully developed right arm of Gudea, for example (fig. 9), was originally thought to mark a particularly rounded style in early Mesopotamian sculpture; however, with a reading of the texts of Gudea as well, we learn that one of the ways he was marked to be a ruler was that he was endowed with a "strong arm" by one of his patron deities—that is, he was given the appropriate strength with which to govern. Thus, the well-developed arm of the ruler is not only a function of style, but also of iconography—it conveys meaningful information to the informed viewer, and finds its way through time, as later statues also attest.[34]

Assurnasirpal II and the protective genii that decorate his palace are equally marked by powerful musculature (e.g., fig. 10). The "realism" of the details is confirmed by the bracelet worn by king and genius, for which an almost exact example in gold has been found in one of the queens' tombs recently discovered at Nimrud.[35] However, like Gudea, the way the body is represented is subject to a high degree of idealization, according to norms of value rather than of visual verifiability. Gudea, then, with his direct gaze, his powerful arm, and his upright, stable posture, tells us that he is coded with the attributes of leadership—the identical message provided by/for Assurnasirpal II in his massively-proportioned, solid statue from the Ishtar Sharrat-niphi Temple at Nimrud.[36]

There is another way in which an earlier Mesopotamian monument can help us to understand the later Assyrian sculptures. On the Stele of Naram-Sîn (fig. 11), who ruled some 1400 years before Assurnasirpal, the Akkadian king stands at the top of his carved relief, weapons in hand, as identifiable in size, centrality and importance as Assurnasirpal or Assurbanipal.[37] The body of Naram-Sîn is well-proportioned, and

---

[34] I. Winter, "The Body of the Able Ruler: Toward an Understanding of the Statues of Gudea," in H. Behrens et al., eds., DUMU E2-DUB-BA-A: *Studies in Honor of Åke W. Sjöberg* (Philadelphia, 1989), 573–83. See also the powerful arms on a diorite statue from Assur, A. Moortgat, *The Art of Ancient Mesopotamia* (London and New York, 1969), figs. 139–40.

[35] A. Harrak, "The Royal Tombs of Nimrud and their Jewellery," *Bulletin of the Canadian Society for Mesopotamian Studies* 20 (1990) 5–13 and fig. 4, as a direct comparison to the bracelet worn by Assurnasirpal II and his genii (e.g., our figs. 7 and 11).

[36] Ht. 113 cm without podium, 191 cm including the podium, which was clearly part of its original placement—Curtis and Reade, *Art and Empire*, p. 43.

[37] On this topic, see now I. Winter, "Sex, Rhetoric and the Public Monument: The Alluring Body of Naram-Sîn of Agade," in N. Kampen, ed., *Sexuality in Ancient Art* (Cambridge, 1996), 11–26.

his upright posture is clearly in contrast to that of his cringing, falling, retreating enemy—a distinction entirely consistent with that made by Cifarelli in her study of Assurnasirpal's enemy when contrasted with representations of the victorious ruler.[38]

A second trait Naram-Sîn and Assurnasirpal have in common is their well-formed, abundant beards. A full beard is a secondary sexual characteristic, the mark of fully-developed manhood. On the stele, although others of Naram-Sîn's officers are bearded, his is by far the most abundant. It is matched well by the carefully-rendered curls of Assurnasirpal's full beard on his statue from the Ishtar Temple in Nimrud. The importance of the royal beard was well-understood in early 20th c. England, as reflected in a Punch cartoon of 1931. The artist employs Assyrian-style figures to indicate the correspondance between a full beard and stage-of-life, as a clearly Assyrian ruler-father is made to say to his adolescent, if princely, son: *"And what is more, my boy, when I was young, I refrained from growing a beard until I was in a position which enabled me to maintain it in comfort!"*

This full beard is characteristic of all Assyrian rulers. It is particularly abundant in the representation of Esarhaddon on his stele from Zincirli, where the king's beard is both longer and fuller than those of his two sons depicted on either side of the stele, despite the fact that he is proclaiming their right to succeed him in ruling Assyria and Babylonia (fig. 12).[39] Once again, then, I would suggest we have a confluence of "style" and "iconography" in the coded message being sent by the king's full beard—manly, mature, noble, powerful, like the dominant male in a pride of lions with his generous mane.[40]

Returning briefly to the Stele of Naram-Sîn, I have discussed elsewhere how the well-formed body of the ruler may be understood in conjunction with physiognomic omen texts found at Nineveh, where the symbolic importance of perfect body parts, and of a well-formed body, are made explicit.[41] Despite the fact that the body of Assurnasirpal on his stele from the Ninurta Temple in Nimrud (fig. 7) is neither as revealed nor or elegant of proportion as that of Naram-Sîn, the parallelism in form, good proportion and completeness is there; and so also

---

[38] See Cifarelli dissertation, cited above.

[39] Börker-Klähn, *Bildstelen*, No. 219.

[40] Indeed, Adad-nirari II of Assyria (911–891 B.C.) actually couples the two when he proclaims: "I am a lion and I am a (potent) male" (*labbāku u zikarāku*)—Grayson, *RIMA* 2:147 = AN II.A.0.99.2, line 15).

[41] Winter, *Sexuality in Ancient Art*, p. 12.

is the vocabulary. A text of Sennacherib refers to his alabaster gateway figures, the quarrying of which he recorded with such detail, as being "of perfect proportions."[42] The ruler, too, would be expected to be perfect in form and outstanding in size, such that he would stand out amongst the people—a frequent trope in earlier Sumerian, to indicate that the gods would then take notice of him and select him to rule, made explicit with respect to the relationship between appearance and public attention in at least one 12th century Babylonian text.[43]

And there is more. Naram-Sîn wears a horned headdress on his stele, something usually reserved only for gods; and indeed, he is the first attested ancient Mesopotamian ruler to have used the divine determinative before his name.[44] Several other kings follow suit in the later third millennium B.C. By the time of the Assyrians in the first millennium, there is no evidence that kings were formally deified; however special divine protection and involvement in the physical person of the king are indicated in a number of ways.

On the Ninurta Temple stele, as on most Assyrian stelae, several symbols appear in the upper field, which have been identified with particular Assyrian deities—Aššur, Sin, Shamash, Adad the storm god—and these same symbols are repeated as pendants on a necklace worn by the king as well (see fig. 7). That jewellery has long played a signifying role in portraiture is well-known from our own tradition. On many Italian Renaissance portraits of women, for example, certain types of brooches identify the sitter as a newly-wed of good family, since such jewellery was given by the husband's family at marriage (and had to be relinquished within a fixed period afterward, such display being deemed inappropriate for a matron).[45] Or, in a case closer to home, the portrait of Lady Layard, wife of Sir Austen Henry Layard, excavator of Nimrud and Nineveh, depicts her wearing as identifying features the jewellery made of Mesopotamian cylinder and stamp seals her husband

---

[42] Sennacherib, *OIP* 2, vi 65–6, cited in CAD Ṣ:79, *ṣalmu* and AHw 655, *minītu*.

[43] See Eannatum of Lagash, in the text on the "Stele of the Vultures" found at Tello: H. Steible and H. Behrens, *Bau- und Weihinschriften, Teil I: Inschriften aus 'Lagaš'* [Freiburger Altorientalische Studien, Bd. 5] (Wiesbaden, 1982), 120–45; and Nebuchadnezzar I of Babylon, bilingual inscription, in G. Frame, *RIMB 2* (Toronto, 1995) No. 9, 11. 15–16: "The people of the land regarded his… appearance; all of them paid attention to him…" (*kullat-sina putuqqašu*), regarding the return of the god Marduk.

[44] See on this, W. Farber, "Die Vergöttlichung Naram-Sins," *Orientalia* 52 (1983), 67–62, and discussion of the visual aspects in Winter, *Sexuality in Ancient Art*, p. 16.

[45] Adrian Randolph, "Performing the Bridal Body in Fifteenth-Century Florence," in M. I. Marcus, ed., *The Decorated Body: Fashioning Identity in Visual Culture* (in press).

had given her as a wedding gift the year before.[46] For the case of Assurnasirpal, the necklace of divine symbols clearly marks the king as one under the protection of the great gods of the Assyrian pantheon, just as Naram-Sîn shows himself beneath divine astral symbols at the top of the stele.

How this special relationship was considered to have been operationalized is reflected in a most important text of one of Assurnasirpal's predecessors, Adad-nirari II of Assyria (911–891 B.C.), who tells us that the gods "intervened to alter my appearance to lordly appearance, fixed/established and perfected my features," [*nabnīti*] *ana nabnīti bēlūti uštennû/šikin bunnannîya išeriš ušeklilūma*, thereby making of him one "fit to rule."[47] Similarly, Assurbanipal claims that it was the great gods who "gave me a splendid figure and made my strength great."[48]

With these Assyrian words in mind, let us then come back to the issue of portraiture and "likeness" with respect to Assyrian images. Fundamental is whether even terms such as "likeness" or "appearance" should be expected to correspond literally to the physiognomy of the intended natural referent. For all we know, to the Assyrian, appearance may have also included attributes that we think of as external to the person—headgear, clothing, accoutrements—but could to the ancient have been so inseparable from office or identity that recognition was immediate. Such attributes could be any exclusive marker signifying office, like the king's ceremonial mace and belt daggars, or like his headdress, as distinctive in Assyria as the horned headdress would have been earlier for Naram-Sîn.[49]

---

[46] R. D. Barnett, "Lady Layard's Jewellery," in P. R. S. Moorey and P. Parr, eds., *Archaeology in the Levant: Essays for Kathleen Kenyon* (Warminster, 1978), 172–79; both the painting and the actual necklace, earrings and ring were illustrated and discussed in the exhibition catalogue Curtis and Reade, *Art and Empire*, pp. 220–21, nos. 250 and 251, where they also cite J. Rudoe, "Lady Layard's Jewellery and the 'Assyrian Style' in 19th c. Jewellery Design," in F. M. Fales and B. J. Hickey, eds., *Austen Henry Layard tra l'Oriente e Venezia* [Symposium, Venice 26–28 October 1983] (Rome, 1987).

[47] Grayson, *RIMA* 2:147 = AN II.A.0.99.2, lines 6–7.

[48] Cited CAD Š 1:289, *šamāḫu*. This situation of divine physical formation is paralleled by royal assertions of the divine fixing of destiny, as in the Ninurta temple inscription of Assurnasirpal, *RIMA* 2, ANP II.A.0.101.1, lines 36–37, where the king declares that his (royal) "signs," for which, read "destiny," were/was decreed and fixed by the great gods, *šīmāte annâte ina pî ilāni rabûti ûṣânimma/ana šīmtiya kīniš ukinnū...*

[49] See, for example, Reade on the king's mace, with respect to the Ishtar Sharrat-niphi statue: "...the mace...symbolises the authority vested in (the king) as vice-regent of the supreme god" (Curtis and Reade, *Art and Empire*, 43). In this ascription of "reading," I do not believe we are placing too great a burden upon an Assyrian decipherer, any more than it would be upon an ancient Greek. In Euripides' *Ion*, for example, visitors to Delphi are described as identifying the images of various deities by their

Furthermore, for royal and divine images at least, it is possible that the very absence of idiosyncratic physical features constituted the kings' "appearance" and signified their identity; and indeed, Morandi has noted that the basic attributes and mode of representation of the Assyrian ruler remain constant over the entire Assyrian period.[50] The remarkable text of Adad-nirari II cited above is useful here, for we find the ruler's appearance and features, *nabnītu* and *bunnannû*, described as having been molded by the gods in order to make him recognizable as one fit to rule, and this could as well signify "ideal" qualities as "real" in our notions of portraiture. Indeed, if the king were *not* represented as idealized, how could he demonstrate that he had been formed by the gods?

It should also be noted that the god Ea/Enki, whose symbol is likely one of those included on the Ninurta temple stele, is credited by Esarhaddon with being the god "who shapes/creates appearance (*bānû nabnīti*).[51] In other instances, gods are said to invest the ruler with special qualities, as when the Neo-Assyrian kings state specifically that a god provided them with an "awe-inspiring radiance"—probably equivalent to what is indicated in Christian and Buddhist art by a halo: i.e., "glory," a property sufficiently manifest that it served to overwhelm their enemies and became a marking characteristic of the ruler.[52] Thus, what the king could well wish to have perceived in his "features" or "appearance" was

---

attributes—Dionysus by his flowering staff, Zeus by his thunderbolt. In other words, as informed viewers they perform the same act of identification an Assyrian viewer would, not only before divine symbols and attributes, but before the royal image as well. [On the *Ion*, see F. I. Zeitlin, "The artful eye: vision, exphrasis and spectacle in Euripidean theatre," in C. Goldhill and R. Osborne, eds., *Art and Text in ancient Greek culture*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994, p. 150.]

[50] Morandi, *Mesopotamia* 23, 135.

[51] R. Borger, *Die Inschriften Asarhaddons Königs von Assyrien* [AfO Beiheft 9] (Osnabrück, 1967; orig. Graz, 1956), § 53 = AsBbA, line 4. The whole question of the king's aura, or *melammu*, is too complex to be taken up here, and will be developed separately. It is my sense, however, that the radiant and terrible aura said to emanate from the ruler, as from deities, temples, weapons and other selected artifacts, is not unconnected from the issue of idealized properties, and as such, comes close to Hegel's coupling of "shine" (*Schein*) with "the wonder of ideality," on which, see discussion in J. Sallis, *Stone* (Bloomington IN, 1994), pp. 42–43.

[52] E.g., for Esarhaddon, Borger, *Asarhaddon*, § 27 = A, 11.36–37: *Nergal dandanni ilāni uzzu namurratu u šalummatu išruka šeriktī*, "N., mightiest of the gods, bestowed on me fierceness, brilliance and awe-inspiring radiance"; also, for Assurbanipal, cited CAD Š 1:284, *šalummatu* A (= LKA 31 r. 7), *Nergal ittadin šalummatsu*, "N. gave him (invested him with) awe-inspiring radiance." In the texts of Assurnasirpal II, the king includes among his attributes/epithets in the Standard Inscription that he is "crowned with splendor," *apir šalummate*—Grayson, *RIMA 2*, A.0.101.23, line 13; also that his enemy

not necessarily his own historically particular physiognomy, but those aspects of his features/appearance that had been molded by the gods and that resembled (or, could be attributed to) the gods, such that the ruler's features convey qualities of ideal, divinely-sanctioned rulership, not just personhood. This, in fact, comes quite close to Late Antique theology regarding "God-befitting" images, where the Neo-Assyrian images would then be understood as "king-befitting."[53]

Seen from this perspective, the images of Assyrian rulers take their place alongside those of Augustus of Rome of the first century AD, or even those of Louis XIV of France—for example, the state portrait by Hyacinthe Rigaud of 1701—all conveying a highly idealized notion of the qualities of rule. In fact, it has been Louis Marin's study of Louis XIV that has most influenced me in work on Gudea and here.[54] Marin's point is that the king in his portrait must be seen as simultaneously three-fold: first, the specific, historical personage, *Louis*, fourteenth of that name; second, the exemplar of the institution of kingship, *le roi*; and third, the sacral *person-as/in-image*, sanctioned by god and Pope to rule and subject to appropriate ritual and ceremonial attention.

The only thing that separates the otherwise similar aspects of the royal image in the two historical periods is the question of a visually verifiable "likeness" for the Assyrians. We are therefore left with two alternatives for referring to these images. The first is laid out in a paper by Henri Zerner, in which he argues against the proposition that physical likeness is a necessary condition of the portrait.[55] This position requires a (re)definition of the term from traditional Western usage and holds as necessary conditions for portraiture only an intention to reference a particular individual, accompanied by accepted criteria for identification. The second alternative is to avoid the loaded term "portrait" altogether, as one inexorably tied to its Western usage, and to keep to the more general term "image," with all of its attendant ambiguities and hence necessary glosses on the role of "appearance" in representation. The problem has been addressed for the Late Antique by Hans

take fright before his powerful royal aura (IGI *me-lam-me* MAN-*ti-a ip-la-ḫu-ma*)—Nergal Temple inscription, *ibid.*, A.0. 101.1, col. ii, line 13 and elsewhere.

[53] See discussion in M. Barasch, *Icon: Studies in the History of an Idea* (New York and London, 1992), esp. Ch. Four: Resemblance, pp. 69–71.

[54] Louis Marin, *Portrait of the King* (orig. *Le portrait du roi*), translated by Martha M. Houle (Basingstoke, 1988).

[55] H. Zerner, "L'effet de ressemblance," in A. Gentili et al., eds., *Il retratto e la memoria* [Materiali 3] (Rome, 1993), 111–21.

Belting, who distinguishes between the *memorial portrait*, which "records the reality of a single life"—e.g., Roman funerary paintings—and the *heroic image*, which "represents an ideal beyond physical reality," and then suggests that ancient portraiture can achieve a balance between the two.[56] The solution lies perhaps less in the acceptance or rejection of the single term than in the use of a whole noun-phrase; and in consequence, I would tend to agree with Zerner that physical likeness need not be the governing criterion for portraiture. For, *if* the royal appearance as manifest in the ruler's image was constituted by elements and qualities tied to his office and coded for ideal value, as strongly suggested by the fact that the gods are actively engaged in shaping the kings' appearance, and was not coded for physiognomical likeness—in other words, if our primary criterion for the image becomes identification via attributes appropriate to rulership—then what we have here may not be "a portrait of *the* king" in modern terms; but it is certainly "the portrait of *a* king." And let there be no confusion: by the beard and attributes, it is "the portrait of an *Assyrian* king."

Confirmation comes, I believe, from Assyrian terminology itself. By using the abstract noun for "kingship," *šarrūtu*, in the compound *ṣalam šarrūtiya*, image of the ruler "*in the office of my kingship*," we are told quite literally that this is not a personal, but an *official image*. As such, within the category of royal representation, an image resembling *a ruler* does not mean the same thing at all as an image merely resembling *the ruler*; and we may thus deny physiological likeness as a necessary condition of the portrait, thereby permitting ourselves a broader definition of the term—one in which what is necessary is an identifiable reference and accepted criteria for constituting that identity.[57]

---

[56] H. Belting, *Likeness and Presence: A History of the Image before the Era of Art*, translated by E. Jephcott, (Chicago, 1994), esp. pp. 98–99.
[57] In just this way, Stephen Bann has discussed representation not valued by a measured degree of likeness (that is, not the illusionism of the Greeks and their successors), but rather valued by a particular *relationship* between an image and its referent— S. Bann, *The Clothing of Clio: A Study of the Representation of History in 19th century Britain and France* (Cambridge, 1984). I would even go so far as to suggest that the *role* of inscriptions on statues and stelae—as distinct from mere content—was to make clear in no uncertain terms the specific historical identification of the referent behind the image. Indeed, Shalmaneser III, in his throne-base inscription from Nimrud, declares that he set up "an image of myself as king, to establish my name," *ṣalam šarrūtiya mukīn šumiya* (P. Hulin, "The Inscriptions on the Carved Throne-base of Shalmaneser III," *Iraq* 25 (1963) 52, line 13), which articulates the role of the royal image, and why the inscription would be an integral part thereof. *If* the visual component is highly idealized, then its historical specificity is achieved through the inscription.

We get a hint of the rhetorical value of an image coded for ideal
qualities and attributes of a ruler from text references that go beyond
what is expected of the appearance of an exemplary ruler, compar-
ing the appearance of the king to that of a god. In a letter of Adad-
šumu-uṣur, chief exorcist to Esarhaddon, for example, the priest not
only acknowledges the king as "the chosen one of the great gods," but
closes with the phrase: "The king is the perfect likeness of the god." In
a second letter, the same official avers that "the father of the king, my
lord, was the very image of Bel, and the king, my lord, is likewise the
very image of Bel"—LUGAL *be-lí ṣa-lam* ᵈEN-*ma šu-ú*.⁵⁸ At the simplest
level, then, if we understand this as more than courtly hyperbole, it is
essential for the king to be perceived as possessing, *and his image to be
perceived as manifesting*, traits undiluted by personal idiosyncracy if he is
to be seen as a perfect likeness of the god. But I believe we can also
see the hermeneutic circumference come full circle, providing a glimpse
into the politics of representation. For, the king not only exercises
control over his own image, as demonstrated above; he also designates
the craftsmen, orders the making of, and/or exercises control over the
execution of the divine images that in turn serve as the manifestation of
the gods on earth;⁵⁹ and he is therefore in a perfect position to ensure
that *he* resembles the gods, if he subjects the gods' images to the same
criteria of representation as his own!

In closing, it is important to recall that the Ishtar Sharrat-nipḫi statue
of Assurnasirpal, when standing on its base, was nearly 2 metres in
height, and would have towered over the ordinary viewer (fig. 6). Like
the Ninurta Temple stele (fig. 7), which also stood well above normal
height, it was found in association with a temple.⁶⁰ The statues of Gudea
as well had each been dedicated to a specific Sumerian deity, ritually
consecrated and then placed before the appropriate divine image in the

---

⁵⁸ ABL 652 = 80-7-19,22, rev. 12–13: LUGAL *šu-ú* [*k*]*al'* *mu-uš-šu-li šá* DINGIR; and
ABL 6 = K595, obv. 19, Parpola, ed., SAA X, nos. 207 and 228. [See also on this
issue: S. Parpola, "The Assyrian tree of life…," *Journal of Near Eeastern Studies* 52
(1993) 168, n. 33.].
⁵⁹ Sennacherib is referred to as the "maker of the image of Aššur"—*e-piš ṣa-lam*
AN. [ŠÁR…], and is probably also the king who makes the images of Zababa and
Bau; and Esarhaddon, of course, refurbishes the images of the Babylonian gods—see
L. Kataja and R. Whiting, *Grants, Decrees and Gifts of the Neo-Assyrian Period* [SAA XII]
(Helsinki, 1995), no. 21 (= ADD 666 = K 2696, lines 1–2) and no. 87 (= KAV 39 =
VAT 8883, line 3').
⁶⁰ Both temples were north of and immediately adjacent to the royal palace [see
plan of the citadel in M. E. L. Mallowan, *Nimrud and its Remains*, vol. I (New York,
1966), fig. I, p. 32].

god's own sanctuary.[61] Hayim Tadmor cautioned me early on against assuming that Assyrian royal images underwent anything like the same rituals of animation applied to the earlier images, and there is evidence he may well be correct in his hesitation. That Assyrians used the verb "to be born" for images, just as early Sumerians had done (Akk. *walādu*, Sum. tud) is clear, and has been discussed by Barbara N. Porter with respect to Esarhaddon's renewal of statues of the Babylonian gods.[62] However, in a less-frequently-cited Esarhaddon text dealing with the return of the Babylonian gods' images, the king makes such a point of describing how he performed the "Mouth-opening" and "Mouth-washing" rituals at the temple garden canal before the stars (i.e., at night), corresponding so exactly to texts describing the Babylonian practice of animating statues, that one must wonder whether he was so explicit precisely because such rituals of animation were NOT standard Assyrian practice, in order to indicate that he was doing everything to comply with local (Babylonian) tradition.[63]

Nevertheless, this would not preclude the placement of Assyrian royal statues in temples before the resident deity, and indeed, Esarhaddon himself records the placing of a royal image (*ṣalam šarrūtiya*), along with one of his heir, Assurbanipal, in the renewed sanctuary of the old Aššur Temple, while the high priest in the Esagila accounts in his letter for another in Assur and at least three images in Babylonian temples.[64] In addition, an Assyrian letter to the king by one Aššur-hamatu'a refers to statues of Esarhaddon to be placed to the left and the right of the image of the goddess Ishtar in her temple at Arbela; another letter speaks of a pair of statues on either side of the Moon god in Harran;

---

[61] Winter, *Journal of Ritual Studies* 6, 18.

[62] B. N. Porter, "Gods' statues as a tool of Assyrian political policy: Esarhaddon's return of Marduk to Babylon," in L. Martin, ed., *Religious Transformations and Socio-Political Change: Eastern Europe and Latin America* (Berlin and New York, 1993), 9–24, which draws primarily upon Borger, *Asarhaddon*, § 53 = AsBbA, 1. 35.

[63] Borger, *Asarhaddon*, § 57 = AsBbE, 11. 22–23. For the Babylonian text, one version of which was preserved at Nineveh, see also Sidney Smith, "The Babylonian Ritual for the Consecration and Induction of a Divine Statue," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1925), 37–60; E. Ebeling, *Tod und Leben nach den Vorstellungen der Babylonier* (Berlin, 1931); and discussion in Winter, *Journal of Ritual Studies*, cited above.

[64] Borger, *Asarhaddon*, § 57 = AsBbE, Rs. 11. 3–4. It is tempting to suggest that the mention in Landsberger, *BBEA*, line 19, of an image set up in the sanctuary of Belit Assur, could conceivably be referring to the same image as the one that Esarhaddon himself refers to as "in the old Aššur temple," given the synchretisms of the period. Lines 20–21 of the same text further refer to images installed in the É.SAG.GIL and the É.KUR.MEŠ in Babylon, and it is to be presumed that these are in addition to the new image discussed in the letter, which is to be installed in an unspecified place.

and a letter written during the reign of Esarhaddon mentions statues of Sargon in Babylonian sanctuaries.[65]

For these royal statues, as well as for the royal image on stelae, both at home (fig. 13) and abroad, I would suggest that it was the ideal attributes conveyed by their respective images—less biological resemblance than recognizable qualities or attributes marking the ruler—that constituted their "appearance" and accounted for their aesthetic valence. In all of these images, statue and stela, the king, in Hegel's terms, *verdoppelt sich*, doubles himself—putting himself before himself, and thereby before the viewer. The self he presents through (re-)presentation is that very divinely-molded self possessed of all the authority he would claim politically.

If we then return to the title of the present paper, "Art *in* Empire," I would note that, like official art in any political system, the overall output functions to represent the state as its governors would wish it to be seen. When the system is highly hierarchical, it *must*, whether by direct reference or by allusion, reinforce those aspects of the hierarchy that keep subordinate social tiers in place; and that means, in one way or another, reinforcing the role(s) at the top of the hierarchy. That rulers in Assyria chose to be depicted in particular sets of roles on the reliefs, and with particular sets of attributes in both reliefs and three-dimensional sculpture, constrains us, as it did their subjects, to visualize the king as he wished to be seen, not merely conceptualize his qualities abstractly. And one of the things we learn from the royal image is that, while in the Neo-Assyrian period the king does not *claim* to be a god, he is not averse to claims of having been divinely shaped, or, as in the letters of Esarhaddon's exorcist, to being seen as the very likeness of a god.

With a consciousness of the aspect of choice in and control over representation in mind, I would emphasize that there is indeed much that can be learned about the institution of kingship, the ideology of

---

[65] The first mention occurs in ABL 1098 = 81–2–4,127; another letter, CT 53 18 = K1036, by the same author, informs the king that the work on his images has been completed. [My thanks to Karen Radner for providing me with the reference to and transliterations of these texts.] The second = ABL 36 = KI032, in S. Parpola, ed., *Letters from Assyrian and Babylonian Scholars* [SAA X] (Helsinki, 1993), no. 13, rev., 2'–5'; the third = ABL 1014 = K4678, in *ibid.*, no. 350, rev. 12–13. In fact, I am struck by the duplication of images of the king, to right and left of the god's image in Arbela and in Harran, and wonder whether this is not a clue to the duplication of the king's image in Assurnasirpal's throneroom relief with the 'sacred tree,' our fig. 2.

rule, and the way in which Assyrian rulers viewed themselves in office from their royal images. However much we have tended to be impressed by the extraordinary Assyrian achievement of the reliefs in the development of visual narrative and the rendering of complex schemata, the simple representation of the royal figure—with all of its heavy proportions, columnar structure, and unindividualized features—was actually the most ubiquitous image in the realm and needs to be understood within an Assyrian cultural context. It showed the king as he wanted to be seen; and by its very existence, in conjunction with the accompanying inscription, established the king's "name." Yet, it is not sufficient to see these royal images merely as commisions by or for their respective kings, and, that having been said, set them aside to concentrate on the reliefs. As members of a specific artifact-class, the royal statues actively functioned within the elaborate "sign-producing symbolic system" of the state apparatus—both as a function of their placement and their style.[66] Through the very act of representation, they made manifest, and hence worked to construct, *the institution of kingship* itself, giving concrete form to underlying concepts of divinely sanctioned rule and the ideal qualities of the ruler.

Acknowledgments

---

[66] A. L. Oppenheim, "Neo Assyrian and Neo Babylonian Empires," in H. D. Laswell et al., eds., *Propaganda and Communication in World History, Volume I: The Symbolic Instrument in Early Times* (Honolulu, 1979), 112.
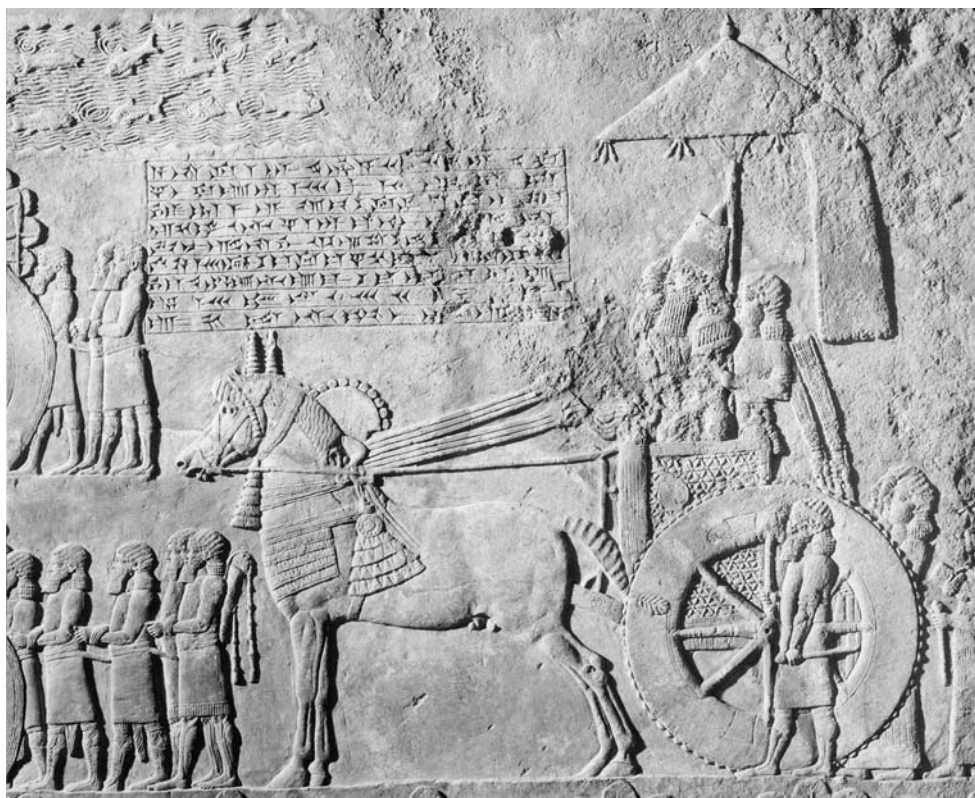
Figure 1. Detail of Assurbanipal relief: king in chariot, with epigraphic text—
Room M, slab 13, North Palace, Nineveh [BM WAA 124945; photograph
courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum].

Figure 2. Relief of Assurnasirpal II: king duplicated before sacred tree, with Standard Inscription writen over the slab—Throneroom B, slab 23, Northwest Palace, Nimrud [BM WAA 124531; photograph courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum].

Figure 3. Relief of Tiglath Pileser III: king in chariot—Central Palace, Nimrud [BM 118908; photograph courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum].

Figure 4. Detail of relief of Sennacherib receiving captives and booty from his siege of Lachish—
Room 36, Southwest Palace, Nineveh [BM 124911; photograph courtesy of the
Trustees of the British Museum].

Figure 5. Detail of relief of Assurbanipal: Ulai River battle—Room 33, slab 3, Southwest Palace, Nineveh [BM WAA 124801c; photograph courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum].

Figure 6. Statue of Assurnasirpal II—Ishtar Sharrat-nipḫi Temple, Nimrud
[BM WAA 118871; photograph by the author].

Figure 7. Ninurta Temple Stele ("Great Monolith") of Assurnasirpal II—
Entrance, Ninurta Temple, Nimrud [BM WAA 118805; photograph courtesy
of the Trustees of the British Museum].

Figure 8. Detail, top of stele containing the laws of Hammurabi, found at Susa, 18th c. B.C. [Louvre; photograph courtesy of the Département des Antiquités Orientales, Musée du Louvre].

Figure 9. Statue of Gudea of Lagash, from Tello, ca. 2100 B.C. [Louvre, AO 6; photograph courtesy of the Département des Antiquités Orientales, Musée du Louvre].

Figure 10. Detail of relief of Assurnasirpal II: king with bowl and bow, shown after a wild-bull hunt—Throneroom B, slab 20 bottom, Northwest Palace, Nimrud [BM WAA 124533; photograph by the author].

Figure 11. Stele of Naram-Sîn of Agade, found at Susa, ca. 2250 B.C. [Louvre, Sb4; photograph courtesy of the Département des Antiquités Orientales, Musée du Louvre].

Figure 12. Stele of Esarhaddon, from Sam'al (Zincirli) [Berlin, VA 8873;
photograph courtesy of the Photographische Abteilung,
Staatliche Museen zu Berlin].

Figure 13. Detail of relief of Assurbanipal: stele with royal image at entrance to a hilltop pavillion in irrigated park (Nineveh or Arbela?)—Room H, North Palace, Nineveh [BM WAA 124939; photograph courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum].

CHAPTER THREE

LE PALAIS IMAGINAIRE: SCALE AND MEANING IN THE ICONOGRAPHY OF NEO-ASSYRIAN CYLINDER SEALS

Pirḥiya Beck
in memoriam

André Malraux, in his highly influential book *Le Musée imaginaire*, originally published in 1947, examined the powerful role of photography in the then-modern experience of works of art. An easily reproducible medium, the photographic image had become the means by which those who could not afford to travel to see a given master-work, or purchase an engraving or copy, could none-the-less be brought before a facsimile of the work. Malraux's point was that with the advent of photographic reproduction, the medium of diffusion had come to substitute for direct experience on an unprecedented scale (1965: 16). The *Museum Without Walls* of the English translation thereby existed in the imagination of the accumulator of mental as well as reproduced images.

Malraux further noted that the relatively inexpensive photograph permitted dissemination not only of the acknowledged great works, but also of works of lesser masters, and, read between the lines, of lesser cultures (ibid. 88).[1] He argued that photography had thus served to change the very notion of the masterpiece itself.

It is relevant to the field of ancient Near Eastern studies that in order to make this point, Malraux included in his carefully-illustrated narrative a photographic detail of the lion hunt slab from Aššurnaṣirpal II's Northwest palace at Nimrud (1947: 114, fig. 69 = our fig. 3), along with a modern impression of an Elamite cylinder seal showing a roaring lion (ibid. 115, fig. 70). In the process of such photographic manipulation, it was observed, works lose their scale ("perdent leur

---

* This article originally appeared as "*Le Palais imaginaire*: Scale and Meaning in Neo-Assyrian Cylinder Seals," in *Images as Media: Sources for the Cultural History of the Near East and the Eastern Mediterranean (1st Millenium BCE) [OBO 175]*, C. Uehlinger, ed. Fribourg: University Press, 2000, pp. 51–88.

[1] "One engraved copies of Michelangelo; one photographs the lesser masters, 'peinture naïve', 'les arts inconnus'."

échelle"). Malraux concluded that the consequence of all this "création par la photographie" was "*considérable*" (ibid. 98, emphasis mine).

Malraux's selection of a sculptural relief and a cylinder seal from the ancient Near East is particularly apt for the purposes of the present inquiry, as was his point that photography permits a selection and a juxtaposition never anticipated by the works' makers. It was noted that reproduction takes on a particular importance when applied to minor arts ("lorsqu'elle s'applique aux arts mineurs", ibid. 100). This "new life" of the original, made possible by selection, emphasis, and the elision of scale, was said to take on additional force through the possibilities afforded by dialogue with other monuments ("le rapprochement des photographies", ibid. 115). Illustration of the point was precisely the example cited above of the Elamite seal impression, which, when set alongside the Assyrian relief in the same photographic format, became itself a bas-relief.

That photographed works lose their scale, even when published with an accompanying caption giving measurements, is well known to anyone who teaches with visual aids—slides or photos: without some referential element consciously included to provide scale for *both* images, the seal and the architectural relief appear identical in size, and are visually processed as such. This optical phenomenon adds additional meaning to the *musée imaginaire* as the site where things come together in the mind that were never intended to be so conjoined, and gives to the juxtaposed works an "amplitude" that, according to Malraux they would otherwise lack.

There can be little doubt that Malraux's thesis was the inspiration for Pierre Amiet when, as Conservateur-en-chef of the Département des Antiquités Orientales of the Musée du Louvre, he mounted the exhibition entitled *Bas-reliefs imaginaires* in the Hotel de la Monnaie, Paris, in 1973. In the introduction to the catalogue, M. Amiet expressed his opinion that the glyptic art of cylinder seals best encapsulated ancient Mesopotamian civilisation (1973: xxi). He suggested that this tiny art form, "ces monuments minuscules", capable of being held in the hand, represented better than "les arts 'majeurs'" the range of artistic production of the periods from which he had taken his examples.

Crucial in understanding Amiet's mission and his chosen strategy for validating the glyptic art of Mesopotamia (although unstated and unillustrated in the catalogue and hence retrievable only in memory and/or behind-the-scenes documentation of the exhibition itself) is that he chose to illustrate the artistic merit of and imagery on the seals not

only by the display of selected examples and their modern impressions in standard vitrines, but also by the display of enormous, free-standing photographic blow-ups of the impressions. As a consequence, the seals' intaglio carving, when seen through the raised relief of the positive impression, was suddenly on a scale comparable to that of the major Assyrian palace reliefs some 1500 years later. This exhibition technique certainly succeeded in making the point that what the West had classified as a minor art form ("art mineur dans nos civilisations", 1973: 1) had, on the contrary, occupied a privileged place in the civilisations of the ancient Near East. I can personally attest to having been overwhelmed by the sculptural richness apparent in the blown-up photographs; but what is more important is that it was through this heightened scale that the seals were indeed elevated to and experienced as a category of "major art".

What the exhibition elided, of course, was the *difference* in scale between seals and reliefs, just as had been anticipated by Malraux; and by so doing, it also elided the difference in function between seals and reliefs.

In the present paper I shall argue that, while there are times when this elision of difference is useful (as, for example, in the cross-cultural/cross-temporal mission of the exhibition noted above), there are equally times when the difference of scale, along with the contexts of use and experience these differences imply, must be kept in view if one is to capture particular aspects of reference and meaning within the originating tradition. In the context of the Fribourg colloquium's inquiry into images as purveyors of meaning in the mass media of the first millennium B.C.E., this distinction becomes all the more important: seals, widely used as tokens validating transactions and identifying authority in state, administrative and commercial affairs, were not only smaller than reliefs carved as part of large-scale decorative programs in the palaces (and occasionally, temples) of ancient Mesopotamia; they also frequently functioned within quite different spheres of activity and experience from the reliefs. And as such, it must at least be considered that the seals could also have had quite different goals, as well as audiences, in their visual display, however related their visual imagery.

The Neo-Assyrian Period of the first half of the 1st millennium B.C.E. affords an excellent test case for such a proposition, as there is preserved in the archaeological record a good comparable sample of both seals and monumental carvings. The reliefs have been well-published and well-studied in the recent literature, while the corpora of seals and sealed

tablets from excavated contexts are beginning to be available as well
(see particularly Parker 1955, 1962; Dalley & Postgate 1984; Homès-
Fredericq 1986; Herbordt 1992, 1996; Marcus 1996; Klengel-Brandt
& Radner 1997, and the forthcoming work of the Assur Project). My
intention here is precisely to uncouple the juxtaposition constructed by
Malraux that erases context and size in the comparison of seal and
relief as independent media, and to put in question the iconographic
repertoires of each sub-set, both as they overlap and as they differ. Par-
allel goals in this enterprise are, first, despite, or perhaps *particularly in*,
instances in which the imagery on seals can be related to imagery on
sculptured reliefs, to return to each their specific role within Assyrian
society; and second, by so doing, to examine the utility and limitations
of some art historical methodologies and theories that underlie the
study of visual imagery. Emphasis will be on exempla rather than on
a large data set, although I am persuaded that the potential is there
to be applied systematically to a large corpus as well. In the end, it is
hoped that, by keeping these differences of scale and function in mind,
it may be possible to contribute to our understanding of the role of
imagery within the Assyrian system of signification.

1. *"Royal" Seals*

1.1. *King/Hero vs. Rampant Lion*

A particular stamp-seal type showing a ruler or hero in single combat
with a rampant lion was early identified as "royal" (Sachs 1953; Parker
1955: 114; see also Millard 1965; Millard 1980–83; = our text fig. 1 and
figs. 1 & 2). Although to date no actual seals have been discovered,
impressed examples of this seal-type have been found either on tablets
of or actually inscribed with the names of at least six Neo-Assyrian
rulers from Šalmaneser III (858–824 B.C.E.) to Aššurbanipal (668–627
B.C.E.) (cf. list, Herbordt 1992: 127 and pls. 34–36); and now that an
uninscribed version has been convincingly suggested to date to the reign
of Aššurnaṣirpal II (883–859 B.C.E.; see Herbordt 1996), the sequence
of seals is brought into conjunction with the more complete sculptured
relief sequence from Aššurnaṣirpal's Northwest Palace at Nimrud/Kalḫu
to Aššurbanipal's North Palace at Nineveh.

    If one were to seek for correspondences between seals and reliefs,
such a corpus would be a natural place to begin, for, *if* the palace
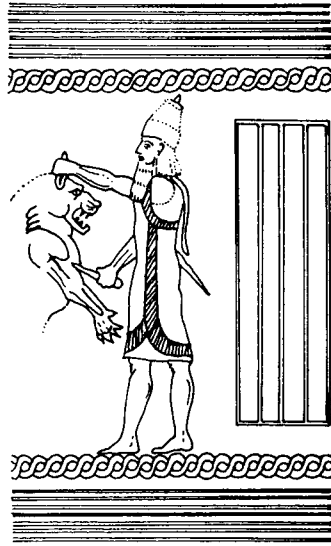
Text figure 1. Drawing of cylinder seal impression from jar sealing: king vs. lion (Nimrud, Fort Shalmaneser, *rab ekalli*'s residence reign of Esarhaddon [680–669 B.C.E.]; ND 7080; Baghdad, Iraq Museum) = Pl. VII:6.

itself stood by metonymy for the state—as "The White House" for the United States (see Winter 1993)—and *if* these were indeed "royal" seals, *then* the official seal of the ruler, as head of state, might be expected to replicate the same iconographic repertoire as that broadcast in the decorative program of the ruler's own seat.

Unfortunately, however, neither among the scenes of lion hunts attributed to Aššurnaṣirpal II on the Northwest Palace reliefs (fig. 3), nor among the production of subsequent rulers, is there an exact parallel of isolated single-hand combat with a lion. On one of the bronze gate-bands from Balawat dated to Aššurnaṣirpal II (= British Museum WA 124698), a rearing lion with splayed paws is depicted twice in a manner not unlike the seals' lions, however the vignettes belongs within a larger hunt sequence. In one instance (Barnett 1974: pl. VI, above) the combatants are two kilted figures, neither of whom wears the royal headdress, and in the other, the rearing lion confronts an attack chariot (see fig. 4). Where the ruler himself does appear in personal combat against a rearing lion, on the reliefs of Aššurbanipal's North Palace (e.g., fig. 5 and Matthiae 1998: 148), the unit is again bedded within the larger narrative sequence of the release and hunt of lions (although in true 'Malraux fashion', the dependent unit within the Aššurbanipal

sequence is almost always cut out as a detail when shown in photo-graphic parallel to the seal-type, thus appearing independent!).[2]

In glossing these stamp-seals as "royal"—implying the kings' own seal—this discrepancy has not been problematized. The analytical operation has involved mere 'motif recognition'; and it has often seemed permissible to conflate the motif of the extended *lion-hunt* with that of the single-hand *lion-combat*. The reduced dyad has thus been read, more implicitly than explicitly, as a necessary abbreviation given the limited space on the surface of the stamp seal itself; and the conflation of hunt and combat permits the two to be seen as equal alternatives within the long history of association of the Mesopotamian ruler with dominance over this most powerful of beasts (Cassin 1987a).

Several problems arise with this conflation, however. While we must allow for the incompleteness of the archaeological record and the pos-sibility of undiscovered monuments or additional palace reliefs that *do* in fact represent Assyrian rulers in single combat with a rampant lion, its absence to date cannot be ignored. For what has been preserved, the distinction between the 'narrativity' of the hunt reliefs and the abstracted focus on the dyadic pair, or 'iconicity', on the seals (on which distinction, see Winter 1985), is not trivial. And on the single occasion when Aššurbanipal or his artists did choose to abstract the king's lion-hunt on a free-standing monument with a limited spatial field—i.e., the stele depicted overlooking the hunt area around Nineveh from the lion hunt sequence of Room C in the North Palace (Barnett 1977:

───────────

[2] The closest approximation to the seal imagery occurs on a rarely-published relief in the Louvre (AO 19903) from the North Palace at Nineveh. Consisting of three registers related to the lion-hunt, the middle register shows the king alone, spearing a rampant lion, while two soldiers with weapons stand to his left (Matthiae 1998: 148); to his right, two additional soldiers move away from the action, toward the right. Thus, the king and lion could be said to be framed by the two groups of soldiers. Never-theless, as a sub-unit, it is still embedded within a larger scene of the hunt. Indeed, since the Aššurbanipal relief is late in the seal motif's sequence, one could suggest, rather than the seal copying a relief, that the 'vignette' in the hunt scene represents instead a direct quote from the seal-type—an insertion into the palace repertoire of the official state pose!

It should be noted that at least four dissertations dealing with aspects of the lion hunts of Aššurbanipal are presently in preparation: Jülide Aker for Harvard University; Giuseppe Sinopoli for the University of Rome "La Sapienza"; Chikako Watanabe for Cambridge University (see provisionally, C. Watanabe 1998a); Elnathan Weissert for Hebrew University, Jerusalem (see provisionally, Weissert 1997). This focused attention is timely, given advances in both cultural understanding and analytical process in recent years, and it is to be anticipated that each will contribute distinctively and significantly to our understanding of the theme and its dependent units.

pl. VI; reproduced in Weissert 1997: figs. 3–4)—it is the narrative unit of the king in his chariot spearing an attacking lion that is selected for depiction, virtually a direct quote from the full-scale hunt on the reliefs. How best, then, to understand the lack of fit, or rather, the variance, between the preserved sealings and the royal reliefs?

I would first note that, from the Hebrew Bible book of Esther, in which the Persian King is said to give over his personal signet (ring) to his minister (Esther 3:10 and 8:2), to the Moghul painting showing a portrait of Shah Jehan holding his own seal (S. Canby 1998: no. 106, dated 1628), the notion of a single royal seal, use of which would affirm the legitimacy of documents and/or officially mark the sovereign's orders, has colored our expectations of these Neo-Assyrian stamps. Indeed, for the Moghul period, such a singularity of function and association, if not identity, is clearly ascribed. The inscription on the seal held by Shah Jehan replicates the ruler's own imperial titles: "King of the World", "Ever-victorious", etc.; while the contemporary *Shah Jehan-nama*, probably referring to the very seal depicted in the portrait, describes a royal seal "on which the noble name of His Majesty and the honorable names of his imperial ancestors were inscribed, and which is stamped on all the royal orders and commands" (cited S. Canby 1998: 142–144). In the Moghul case, then, there can truly be said to be a homology between the person of the Emperor and his mark/seal. Just as the Emperor *is*, possessed of a name, titles, and a particular genealogy, so also the seal replicates his name, titles and genealogy, creating a juridical identity between the two which permits the mark of the seal to stand as the mark of the ruler, with all of the authority of the ruler himself.

It is tempting to project that the Assyrian ruler would similarly have had a personal royal seal. Such a projection seems inevitable, given standard translations, when it is noted that several Aššurbanipal tax exemption grants from Nineveh contain the formula: "[I, Aššurbanipal…] wrote down and sealed *with my royal seal (ina unqi šarrūtīya aknuk)*…" (Postgate 1969: nos. 9–12; Kataja & Whiting 1995: nos. 25, 26, 29, emphasis mine); and similarly, Aššur-etelli-ilani, successor to Aššurbanipal, speaks of a tax exemption grant being "sealed with his (the king's) *royal seal*, which is not to be altered" (Kataja & Whiting 1995: no. 35, rev. 17–18). Associating this with the seals under discussion is strengthened when one observes that one of the Aššurbanipal texts and the Aššur-etelli-ilani text cited above are actually impressed with the so-called "royal seal" (Kataja & Whiting 1995: 32, 36 =

here fig. 7), as is yet another Aššur-etelli-ilani tax exemption grant, unfortunately broken where mention of sealing might have been, that had been published by Sachs (1953: no. 26 = pl. XVIII:3) in his initial study of the seal-type.

However, upon closer examination of these texts, the actual wording *unqi šarrūtīya* renders the standard translation, and hence the identification of the sealings, problematic. The formulation is *not* "seal of the king", but rather, with the noun *šarrūtu* for "kingship", "seal of my (office of) kingship" (Winter 1997: 365)—that would rather betoken the official state seal.

Once seen as 'state seals' associated with the *office* of kingship, these seals need not be 'royal' if by the term one means singularities used by the royal hand alone. Rather, they would seem to be, as the text implies, 'office seals'—perhaps marking the tablets/grants as 'official' copies for archival purposes, hence, validated by the official state seal—not unlike a later, Neo-Babylonian seal that actually declares itself to be of the royal chancery (*kunuk šiprēti ša šarri*; see CAD Š/3: 72 s. v. *šiprētu* = Frankfort 1939: pl. 36k). As Stefan Maul has observed (1995: 397), it is not the king, but "kingship and authority" that is being referenced by these seals.

In other words, the seal type is actually to be associated with servants *of* the king, or state administrators acting in his name. Millard (1965: 15) had already noted that officials were likely to have had the use of this seal-type, recognized over a wide area as the mark of royal authority (1978: 70), although he retained its association with the royal name (see full discussion by Herbordt 1992: 123ff., esp. 127, 134). The seal was obviously used in conjunction with state activity: for example, in one instance from the reign of Šalmaneser III (fig. 1), the seal-type was used to mark bales of cloth levied by the king (Mallowan 1966: 181); and in another case, dating to the reign of Sargon II (fig. 2), the seal-type was impressed on clay apparently applied to a wooden box, with an inscription surrounding the impression labelling an "*ilku* (tax) payment taken from a *bēl pīḫati* official" (Curtis & Reade 1995: 188 no. 194). These instances clearly attest to the seal's use as an official marker at the highest level of state administration, but they do not attest to use by the hand of the king himself; rather, they mark activities recorded for or undertaken on behalf of the king—in use as far afield as Samaria (noted by Sachs 1953: 170, pl. XIX:3; and perpetuated as a motif into Persian period coins from the same area: Y. Meshorer, personal communication).

The attribution of these stamp seals to official state use by a multiplicity of individuals is further demonstrated by the existence of multiple seals of the same motif, occasionally of differing sizes, within the reign of a single ruler. For example, at least three different stamp seals bearing the same motif occur on a single clay jar-sealing of the reign of Esarhaddon (680–669 B.C.E.; Herbordt 1992: pl. 31:3 = Parker 1962: 38, pl. XXI:1; Collon 1987: no. 359 = our text fig. 1 & fig. 6). The multiple nature of the seal-type is further confirmed by the bullae preserving the uninscribed seal now attributed to Aššurnaṣirpal II, where it is shown that at least five different stamps were in use, all containing the same motif but with minor stylistic variations (Herbordt 1996: 412). The existence of multiples, especially when it can be shown that they were in use concurrently, as on the Esarhaddon jar-sealing, speaks strongly to the fact that they were being used by different persons of comparable status in the administrative system.[3]

That the Esarhaddon sealing was discovered at Nimrud within the Fort Shalmaneser residence of the *rab ekalli*, the highest palace official (Parker 1962: 38; Collon 1987: 79), also argues for administrative rather than royal use, albeit on behalf of the royal household. Along with the stamps showing king and lion combat, the jar-sealing also bears a stamped, not rolled, impression of an inscribed cylinder seal, the text of which actually begins: "*Palace of Esarhaddon…*" instead of naming the ruler himself, as in the Moghul case (Collon 1987: 80, emphasis mine).[4]

---

[3] The phenomenon of multiple seals bearing the same motif individually stamped on a single clay bulla or sealing is to be distinguished from the special case of sealings found by Layard at Nineveh (1853: 161) that show as part of a single impression three repetitions within framing circles of the king and lion combat, interspersed with Y-shaped elements or scorpions, and set in a triangular configuration (recently discussed by both Collon and Maul). Collon (1995: 73) demonstrates that the average diameter of the single stamp element is from 1.2 to 1.4 cm, while the larger stamp containing three elements is ca. 3.5–4.0 cm in diameter; and notes (citing Herbordt 1992: 136ff.) that the scorpion may have been a marker of the administration of the Queen's part of the palace economy/property. Maul (1995: 401f.) suggests that the triple image may reflect a notion of the 'triple authority' asserted by Esarhaddon for himself and his two sons, as codified in his Succession Treaty (on which, see below). These perspectives are not mutually exclusive; one would only want to know what association might be established for the Y-shaped element, comparable to the scorpion for the Queen's household. What is certain is that the larger size of the stamp along with the triple repetition could be said to have had an added impact on the viewer, and the seal's wielder would have possessed a more impressive original—particularly if the original were made of precious metal (Millard 1965: 16).

[4] Collon has queried whether one or even two of the surrounding king-and-lion stamps might not have been carved on the circular ends of the inscribed cylinder itself,

The motif on the cylinder replicates the stamps, showing a standing ruler in combat with a rampant lion (Parker 1962: fig. 7; Collon 1987: 15i; our text fig. 1), and this conjunction is later found in the inscriptions of two Aššurbanipal king-and-lion stamps, which also begin "Palace of Aššurbanipal…" (Millard 1965: 13).

Once these seal types are understood as not necessarily being used by the sovereign, but rather by highly-placed others engaged in his administration, the motif's lack of match with direct quotes from royal reliefs seems less troubling. To the extent that the seal of Shah Jehan with its inscription represents the ruler himself *by identity*—standing for the ruler, *as if one* with the ruler, in the first person singular—that is not the case here. Rather, both the motif and the occasional inscriptions or encircling captions would represent the ruler *by reference*, in the third person singular. The wielder of the seal acts *for him*, for the one whose identity is such; and this would account for the emblematic nature of the lion-combat motif on these seals.

The referential aspect of the motif falls into place when it is noted that one of the principal epithets used in the royal inscriptions of Aššurnaṣirpal II identifies the king with a lion (Grayson 1976: § 540), as does a text of his grandfather, Adad-nerari II (911–891 B.C.E.; Grayson 1991: 147, 1. 15; also Cassin 1987a: 184f, 200, 207). It is in this context that I would insist upon distinguishing the iconography of the lion-hunt (reliefs) from that of the lion-combat (seals). For, in the lion hunts of both Aššurnaṣirpal II and Aššurbanipal, the lions are killed, the ruler is triumphant, and in the end, cultic libations are poured over the carcasses by the victorious ruler (e.g., Moortgat 1969: figs. 265f.). In the combat, by contrast, both the general comparability of height of the two figures and the grappling but not-yet-decisive moment selected for representation (nowhere is the carcass of a lion trampled

---

as is known from other Neo-Assyrian examples (e.g., ibid. 84, re nos. 389, 391; and see also the suggestion by Postgate 1973: 249 that the same individual could have had both an official cylinder and an official stamp seal). Should this ever be demonstrated, it would further imply that the stamps, like the cylinder, speak for the palace of the king, rather than with the literal voice of the king. The cylinder would then be used in certain cases, the stamp end in others, such as franking transactions in limited space, or over-stamping the seals of others, on papyrus rather than clay, or on small surfaces, such as bullae. It is unlikely that both ends would ever have contained stamps; however a close stylistic comparison of the rendering of the image on the stamps on the Esarhaddon jar-sealing and on the impressed cylinder (fig. 6) could reveal whether the same hand executed the respective motifs…assuming, of course, that they were done at the same time.

victoriously under foot, for example) suggest a relative equality of the paired combatants.

Through the devices of visual equality, informed by textual rhetoric, it may be suggested that the administrative officers of the king demonstrate their association with the royal figure, who is referenced on the seals in his guise as powerful lion, equal to his formidable opponent.[5] I would further suggest that it is precisely because the *rab ekalli* and other officials of comparable rank act *for* the king, that, in order to emphasize this point visually in their official tokens, their seals of office show the king represented in one of his major guises—just as it has been suggested that the (seated) king was represented in seals belonging to high officials in the Ur III period of the late IIIrd millennium in order to make clear that the seal owner had access to and acted for the ruler (Winter 1987), while for similar reasons, a 'core motif' of the (standing) ruler was a requisite on official seals of the early IInd millennium in Syria (Otto 1998).

To further understand the 'chancery' nature of these seals and their function, the question of the (re-)introduction of stamp seals in the Neo-Assyrian period (see Parker 1962: 27; Paley 1986: 210) merits further investigation, particularly through sealings on dated tablets and dockets. It may be useful to seek additional instances of the use of this motif in cylinder sealings, as in the Esarhaddon case (text fig. 1), to determine whether typology makes a difference in context and/or user. It would also be useful to examine the conditions under which the small seals were used—for example, whether they were ever used in ways that might suggest supervisory oversight, as Rothman (1994) has shown for earlier periods;[6] or whether, as noted by Layard upon

---

[5] In arguing for this equation, I am indebted to James Gaylord and to Jülide Aker. It was only subsequent to an early draft that the masterful discussion of Cassin (1987a: esp. 200–207) came to my attention, in which she emphasizes the same identification, despite the fact that in inscriptions it is clear that the king vanquishes the lion in combat.

[6] Indeed, some hint that oversight might be indicated arises from examples (e.g., Herbordt 1992: Nineveh 149–150, 167–168) where only one individual is named as seal-bearer on the tablet on which two sealings are impressed, one cylinder and one stamp seal. In the first case cited, a *barû*-priest is named; the cylinder shows a devotee before a seated deity (?) and offering table, the stamp a standing devotee before a 'child' above a lotus-blossom. In the second case, a governor (*šaknu*) of Harran is named; the cylinder shows a bearded figure in greeting gesture before a bullman who flanks a winged disk and 'sacred' tree, the stamp a scorpion, while moonsickle and 'eye' float in the oval field. Based upon the discussion below of highly-placed administrative officials in the realm whose seals bore the 'sacred tree' motif, it may be likely that the

finding unattached sealings in Sennacherib's palace at Nineveh (1853: 153), use of the stamp could be related to the introduction of papyrus or other materials which would not be archaeologically preserved. In that case, the stamps so often found on clay bullae would then represent a repetition of what had been used on the contemporary papyrus, and their preservation as bullae would be an artifact of the archiving of papyri by tying them in bundles with bulla-sealed string. In the long run, whether or not the function of the king-and-lion stamp seals can be shown to be different from that of contemporary cylinders, it is important to note that the quantity of such stamp seals, with multiple examples associated with individual reigns, suggests that they constitute an important source of mass-media imagery in the period, at least within administrative and bureaucratic circles.

Finally, the particular imagery chosen for the seal-type is significant, signalling an association with and agency on behalf of the highest state authority, i.e., the king. Presumably, only select, highly-privileged individuals would have carried it; and while at present no title of "seal-bearer to the king" is preserved in Akkadian for the Neo-Assyrian Period, a hint that such a designation might have been recognized is to be found in the 5th-century Aramaic version of the tale of the scribe Ahiqar, who there is given the title "Bearer of the (seal)ring of Sennacherib, king of Assyria" (Cowley 1923: 204, col. 1:1–3; Greenfield 1962, 1995). Although this *could* be understood merely as a Persian period ascription, it is important to remember the role Aramaic scribes played within the Assyrian Empire from the 8th century onward (Tadmor 1991), particularly as, within our period, Sachs noted a double groove around the circumference of the impressed sealing on the Aššur-etelli-ilani tablet (1953: 170 no. 26; cf. our fig. 7), that could represent a (ring) setting, while Millard discussed the possibility of seals of precious metal as direct royal gifts (1978: 70) to valued officials.

However this seal-type might have been earned/distributed, the foregoing discussion would argue for a change in nomenclature from the misleading "royal seal", which, however familiar, then requires lengthy glosses attesting to a wider domain of usage, to "official state (or chancery) seal"—a far more accurate description of its function.

---

governor's seal, hence the primary person cited in the text, is the cylinder. The person or office deploying the stamp is then left uncertain.

1.2. *King in Worship of/Attendance Upon Deities*

A second class of Neo-Assyrian seals that has been considered "royal" on the basis of its imagery (e.g., Paley 1986: 219) is exemplified by a cylinder of Sennacherib (704–681 B.C.E.), impressed by his son Esarhaddon on the latter's "Succession Treaty", devoted to ensuring fealty to the king's chosen heir, Aššurbanipal (Parpola & Watanabe 1988: 28–58; illustrated ibid. 28 and Collon 1987: no. 561). On the seal (text fig. 2), the king stands between two deities mounted on their animal-familiars, Aššur on a *mušḫuššu* and his consort Ninlil/Mulissu/Ištar on a lion.[7] Because the ruler in the first person is identified in the lengthy inscription: "*I am Sennacherib, king…*", it is tempting to see here at last the royal seal type, which proved elusive in the preceding case of the stamp-seals—at least for Sennacherib. This reading is especially attractive, since Sennacherib in his Khinis and Maltai rock reliefs has chosen to represent himself in just such a fashion: flanking the same pair of deities at the one site (text fig. 3), and facing a long array of gods in procession at the other (Bachmann 1927: figs. 9, 26–28; Börker-Klähn 1982: nos. 187f, 207–210). Thus, here one could assert a homology between royal reliefs—albeit not those of the palace—and seal iconography.

Text figure 2. Drawing of cylinder seal impression, seal of the god Aššur, reign of Sennacherib (704–681 B.C.E.): king between deities Aššur and Ištar/Mulissu (Nimrud, Nabû Temple, impressed on Succession Treaty of Esarhaddon; ND 4336; after Parpola & Watanabe 1988: 28).

---

[7] The iconography is that of Ištar; the position of Mulissu, as consort of Aššur, immediately following the chief deity in the curse section of the treaty itself (Parpola & Watanabe 1988: § 38), suggests that the syncretism well-known in the period is operating here, and it is indeed the royal pair that is represented.

Text figure 3. Drawing of rock relief of Sennacherib at Khinis: king flanking
deities Aššur and Ištar/Mulissu (after Börker-Klähn 1982: 187a).

The recently-published complete text of the seal (George 1986: 140f.)
puts such an identification again into question, however. The inscrip-
tion begins by providing a class for the seal-type, suggesting rather that
it falls into the category of gods' seals known from other periods in
Mesopotamia (on which, see Collon 1987: 131–134; Herbordt 1992:
146–149). The text begins: "*Seal of Destinies, with (which) Aššur, king of the
gods, seals the destinies of . . . mankind; whatever he seals he will not alter.*" Only
then does the inscription go on to identify Sennacherib.

   Attribution as a god's seal fits well with the other two seals impressed
on the same treaty, one Middle Assyrian, the other Old Assyrian, for
both of them could also be said to contain iconographic references to
the deity, and the Old Assyrian seal includes an inscription attributing
the seal to the god Aššur as well (George 1986: 141; Collon 1987: nos.
559–560).[8] Identification as a god's seal also fits with an addition to
the text written on the treaty tablet itself, which states explicitly: "*Seal
of the god Aššur, king of the gods, lord of the lands—not to be altered; seal of*

---

[8] Note that other examples of gods' seals are referenced—e.g., in a land grant by
Adad-nerari III to the god Aššur (Kataja & Whiting 1995: no. 1:1: "Seal of Aššur and
Ninurta . . . [which cannot be contested]"), and in a copy of a decree of offerings to the
temple of the same god by the same king (ibid. no. 71: rev. 7: "Ex[cerpted according
to the wording of a valid document (sealed) with the seal of Aššur and Ni]nurta that
is [kept] in the Inner City . . .").

the great ruler, father of the gods—not to be disputed" (Parpola & Watanabe 1988: 28, 11. i–iv). Finally, a further reference to the seal as belonging to the god occurs as the text comes to a close. Just prior to the standard curses against those who might not observe the treaty, adherents are instructed: "You shall guard [this treaty tablet which] is *sealed with the seal of Aššur*, king of the gods…" (ibid. § 35, emphasis mine).

The identification of the seal(s) on the tablet as that/those of the god Aššur, and the explicit statement that it is the presence of the seal which validates the contents, "not to be altered", suggest that, despite the agency and identification of Sennacherib as ruler in the legend, we are in the presence of yet another special case. Here, it is the god's seal, the use of which demonstrates the deity's formal sanction of the treaty's contents and at the same time lends his authority to the force of the treaty. Indeed, use of the god's seal in such a case would constitute a religio-political mechanism entirely appropriate for international or state accords, and is paralleled in the text itself as the deity, along with the entire pantheon, is invoked in support of Esarhaddon's mission. In such a case, it is not surprising that the more traditional form of the cylinder seal would be the appropriate vehicle for the act of legitimizing the treaty, rather than a stamp. The insertion of the person of Sennacherib in the seal's legend must then be understood as an instance of the ruler serving as viceroy of the chief deity of the pantheon, acting for the god, whom he faces, and his consort, as the temporal surrogate of their authority. The use by Esarhaddon of his father's "Seal of Aššur", along with those belonging to the two prior rulers, can then be seen as an instance of the Assyrian king calling out the full arsenal of dynastic as well as divine authority in demonstration of the authority brought to the treaty itself.[9]

In short, just as with the official 'state' or 'chancery' seals, it is important to emphasize that the mere appearance of the king as a major component in the seal's imagery does not imply that the seal was to

---

[9] On the "seal of the ancestor" and its use by royal dynasties and highly-placed families in Mesopotamia, see Cassin 1987b. The notion of the "heirloom seal" is also pursued in Auerbach 1991, in relation to seals of North Syria in the IInd millennium. For the material under discussion, virtually every collection published (e.g., Parker 1955, 1962; Klengel-Brandt & Radner 1997) reports seals which by style and/or datable name are used well beyond their original manufacture. Whether from habit, expediency, nostalgia, for purposes of conscious display, or sanctioned as a marker of official continuity, cannot presently be determined.

be wielded by the king's own hand.[10] Kings may appear on god's seals, just as they appear on the seals of high officials; but neither group constitutes what one would strictly call "royal" seals.[11]

2. *Official Seals*

2.1. *Hunts, Sieges, 'Banquets' and Libations*

There are a number of seal-motifs that do seem to replicate Assyrian palace reliefs—especially those carved in what has been called a "linear" style, dated largely to the 9th century (Porada 1948: 73). In particular, several seals—one in the collection of the Royal Ontario Museum (fig. 8), a second in the Pierpont Morgan Library (Porada 1948: no. 660), a third from Nimrud in the British Museum (Collon 1987: no. 336)—seem to be modeled upon Aššurnaṣirpal II's bull hunt from a chariot on a slab in the throneroom of the Northwest Palace (fig. 9). The same theme is also replicated on the incised border decoration of a royal shawl (Moortgat 1969: fig. 264; J. Canby 1971: pl. 12a) and in bronze on the Aššurnaṣirpal Balawat Gate bands (Barnett 1974: pl. VI bottom). Other seals show sieges against walled citadels or military operations—e.g., sealings from Assur and Nineveh, and a seal from Khorsabad (Collon 1987: nos. 750–752; Herbordt 1992: pl. 22:5; Bleibtreu 1994)—that can be related to Assyrian battle scenes

---

[10] The two documents cited in note 8 (also discussed by Postgate 1969: nos. 11, 13+), leave space for what have been called "three royal seal impressions" and "one royal seal impression", respectively (see Kataja & Whiting 1995: 32, 36). Paley (1986: 211, following Renger 1977) had suggested that when a sealing appears in the reserved space, even when uninscribed, it may be assumed to have belonged to the individual named on the tablet in the sealing formula. It would be useful to go back to all of the known "Grants and Decrees" texts that are sealed, those that refer to gods' seals as well as those that refer to kings' seals (e.g., ibid. nos. 1, 6, 10, 12, 13, 20, 21, etc.) to correlate their iconography with use by specific agents.

[11] In this context, it may prove useful to review the criteria used to designate the six impressions of a stamp seal from Assur, as well as three bullae from Nineveh, on which a probably female figure stands behind the king, as he in turn stands with hands raised in typical greeting/obeisant gesture before a goddess—probably Ištar/Mulissu, standing on a lion (Klengel-Brandt 1994, citing Herbordt 1992: pl. 32:3–5). These stamp seals have been designated "royal" by Klengel, although she acknowledges their use by officials and even speculates that they may have been used within the household of the queen (-mother) (1994: 149); but the seals may also, as with the cylinders just discussed, yield better to investigation under the class of "god's seals" or, in this case, seals of those in the service of the goddess.

on narrative reliefs (Moortgat 1969: 267). Still others show the king seated or standing with his bow poised on the ground, before an attendant with flywhisk and long towel and often a table or pot-stand, which are likely to be ceremonial (on which, see C. Watanabe 1992). These latter seals—from Assur in the Berlin Museum (Moortgat 1940: nos. 660f, 665), from Nimrud (Parker 1955: 102, pl. XIV: 1; ead. 1962: 35, pl. XVII:9), from Khorsabad (Loud & Altman 1938: pls. 57:85, 58:91f.); in the Ashmolean (Buchanan 1966: nos. 592–602), the first from Assur, the rest unprovenienced; in the British Museum (Collon 1987: nos. 338f.); at Yale (NCBS 404); and in the Morgan Library (Porada 1948: nos. 667–672)—also have clear counterparts among the reliefs of the Northwest Palace, particularly Rooms C, G & H (Moortgat 1969: fig. 259; Stearns 1961: pls. 85, 87–90; see our figs. 10 and 11). And finally, a group of cylinders from Nimrud (e.g., Parker 1955: pl. XIII:2f.; Buchanan 1966: no. 587) seem to replicate the border decorations of textiles incised on 9th century reliefs and/or edging bands to narrative paintings as from Residence K at Khorsabad, showing alternating kneeling animals and sun-bursts/rosettes (Loud & Altman 1938: 84f.).

Unfortunately, these seals tend to be uninscribed.[12] On the basis of their rather schematic carving and relatively non-precious material (serpentine, sintered quartz, unidentified brown or grey stone), as well as their relative frequency—particularly for the ceremonial scenes of king and table or libation—it is unlikely they would have belonged to especially high officials. They are most likely to have been used in conjunction with middle-range offices, therefore, and Barbara Parker actually noted that private individuals might well make libations for the life of the king, hence the latter motif at least would be appropriate for courtiers' seals (1962: 35). Of note is that the direction of the imagery is often exactly the reverse of the reliefs (compare figs. 8, 9, 10 and 11), as if the motif had been seen on the reliefs, then copied directly onto the seal such that the impression would produce the reversed image; and this could in turn suggest that the palace was a conscious source for the iconography of the seals. However, until studies of the impressions of these seals are undertaken and correlated with the activities

---

[12] For the greater potential of analysing iconographic motifs in conjunction with *inscribed* seals, see the preliminary study by Paley (1986), who notes that unfortunately, inscribed seals are rare in the period, and tablets impressed with inscribed seals even rarer.

and individuals named on their respective tablets/dockets, etc., as well as with archaeological findspot,[13] it will not be possible to explain their correspondences with the reliefs.

2.2. *King/Official/Genius and Tree*

There is one class of "linear style" seal that bears a motif with strong ties to the Northwest Palace reliefs and also includes a few inscribed seals amongst those known: that is, the group of seals carved with the well-known scene of figures flanking the composite Assyrian tree.[14] The motif as it appears on the far larger group of uninscribed seals is frequently abbreviated to include a single pair of figures—often bare-headed, sometimes beardless, wearing typical "court" dress (on which, see Braun-Holzinger 1994), occasionally a griffin-headed and winged humanoid—on either side of the tree, with a winged disk above (e.g., Moortgat 1940: nos. 675, 606, from Assur; Porada 1948: no. 644 = our fig. 12). Occasionally the theme is juxtaposed to other elements—symbols of additional deities, or heraldic animals (e.g., Parker 1962: pls. IX:1, XVIII:1, from the outer gate chamber of the Nabû Temple and the SE courtyard of Fort Shalmaneser, Nimrud, resp.).

The inscribed examples tend to replicate more closely not only the pairing of figures and tree that proliferated throughout the Northwest Palace but the more elaborate composition of ruler flanked by genii with central tree surmounted by winged disk, as seen on the two relief slabs, B.13 and B.23, marking the focal points of the palace throneroom (e.g., Moortgat 1969: fig. 257 = our fig. 13).

One such seal, found at Tarbiṣu (Collon 1987: no. 341 = our fig. 14), is also clearly better carved than the uninscribed examples, with finer modelling and higher relief. The inscription, written across the top of the seal, tells us that this is the "*Seal of Mušezib-Ninurta, governor, son of Ninurta-ereš, ditto, son of Samanuḫa-šar-ilani, ditto*". The last-named individual was apparently the ruler of Šadikanni/Arban in 883, early in the reign of Aššurnaṣirpal II (Collon 1987: 77).

---

[13] As is currently being undertaken for the Diyala sealings by Clemens Reichel of the Oriental Institute, and as has been done by Adelheid Otto (1998) for the Old Babylonian Period in Syria.

[14] More properly, the "tree of abundance" (Porter 1993: 134). Paley (1986: 212–215) and K. Watanabe (1993b) have also discussed these occurrences, the latter with respect to the seal of one Minu-aḫti-ana-ištari, on which the inscription takes the place of the tree, between two kneeling figures and the winged disk above.

On another seal of this group, found on the Temple Mound at Kish and presently in the Ashmolean Museum (Buchanan 1966: no. 630; K. Watanabe 1992: 367, pl. 71:f; discussed also by Paley 1986 and Tadmor & Tadmor 1995), a goddess, probably Ištar with the venus star above her head, is added to the right of the configuration. There, the inscription consists of four personal names, inserted vertically on either side of the tree. The second-named is the ruler, Šalmaneser, king of Assyria; the third individual, one Pan-Aššur-lamur, is identified on the seal as the governor of Assur (^{lú}*šakin māti* BAL.TIL^{ki}). This person is also known from other sources to have been governor of that city of Assur under Šalmaneser IV (782–773 B.C.E.), and held the office of *limmu* in both 776 and again in 759 under Aššur-dan—once again, then, a personage of high status (K. Watanabe 1994; Millard 1994: 39; Tadmor & Tadmor 1995: 354). Yet another seal, that includes the goddess adjacent to the tree-motif is inscribed for an individual named Minu-epuš-ana-ili, an official whose position was that of "chief of (grain) stores" (Collon 1987: no. 345; mentioned in Paley 1986, and see now discussion in K. Watanabe 1993b). The high-quality stones—carnelian, lapis lazuli, and mottled jasper respectively—further speak to the elite status of their owners.[15]

---

[15] Despite the fact that this motif seems to decrease in popularity in palace reliefs after Aššurnaṣirpal (Porter 1993: 139), it does not disappear altogether. The motif was executed in glazed brick under Šalmaneser III in Fort Shalmaneser (Reade 1963); fragments have been found on broken slabs from the reigns of Tiglath-Pileser III at Nimrud and of Sargon II at Khorsabad (Bleibtreu 1980: figs. 31, 42); and it is also reported as coming from a niche just opposite the main entrance to Sennacherib's throneroom at Nineveh (J. M. Russell, personal communication, noted in Porter 1993: n. 28). In addition, it occurs as the primary motif adorning the royal garment worn by Aššurbanipal in his lion hunt from Room C of the North Palace at Nineveh, appearing just in the middle of the king's chest, as it had also appeared in the garment decorations of Aššurnaṣirpal, for example from Room G, slab 3, of the Northwest Palace, Nimrud (Barnett 1977: pl. VIII; J. Canby 1971 = our figs. 15 and 16). This last suggests that even if there is no evidence for the presence of the motif on a large scale in late reigns, its significance had not been lost. Similarly, it can be shown on stylistic grounds that the motif continues on seals as well beyond the 9th century in the Neo-Assyrian period: for example, a well-carved carnelian example in the British Museum that was part of the jewellery given by the excavator of Nimrud, A. H. Layard, to his wife (Collon 1987: no. 351), on which deities on their attribute animals, probably Aššur and Mulissu, reminiscent of the "God Aššur" seal of Sennacherib, flank the tree, attended by a fish-priest; on a chalcedony seal from Assur (Moortgat 1940: no. 606), on which griffins flank the tree; and on sealings from Nimrud and Nineveh (Herbordt 1992: pl. 3:2 and 13). It also appears on later stamp seals, as one from Ur in the Iraq Museum (IM 9186), and others from Nimrud, Nineveh and Larsa (see Herbordt 1992: pl. 13:1–3, 7–8, 17).

It cannot be trivial that the motif on the seals, particularly that of Mušezib-Ninurta, corresponds so exactly to what was clearly a primary motif in the palace of the ruler—a motif placed immediately behind the living king on his throne, or on axis with the main doorway of his throneroom (on which, see Winter 1981: 10). This iconographic correspondence has been frequently noted (for example, Porter 1993: 129 n. 1), but does not seem to have been interrogated beyond the observation of parallel occurrences. However, once one disaggregates the seals from the reliefs, as advocated at the beginning of the present paper, other questions spring to mind. Paramount amongst them is: just *what* is it that a given high official was signalling when his seal contained a motif so prominently associated with the throneroom and the throne in the 9th and perhaps into the 8th century B.C.E.,[16] and so closely associated with the ruler that it was blazoned *on* the body of the ruler (i.e., on his royal garment, figs. 15 and 16) from the 9th century well into the 7th?

To even ask this question is to move beyond the merely iconographic, i.e., identification of a motif, to the semiotic. I shall return to the above question and the motif's value as a 'sign' below, but wish to pose it now, in the context of the possibility that other high officials, including other *limmu* officials, might also have held seals bearing this motif.[17] Since the office was temporary and rotating (see Millard 1994), such individuals would not necessarily identify themselves in terms of that position, but rather by their patronyms and/or their normal offices—to which they would presumably return after the *limmu* year.

Dominique Collon has observed that Mušezib-Ninurta also possessed another large, well-cut carnelian seal, now in Berlin, with a different motif: unfortunately, damaged at the center, but showing some configuration of gods and ruler flanked by scorpion-men and winged griffin-genii, and bearing a dedication by Mušezib-Ninurta to the local god of Šadikanni, Samanuḫa (Collon 1998 = Moortgat 1940: no. 600). The possibility must at least be considered therefore that those in administrative office might have used a seal with the "flanked tree and winged disk" motif to signal state office, while at the same time maintaining an independent personal- or local office-related seal that

---

[16] Note also the large glazed brick panel from Fort Shalmaneser (Reade 1963).
[17] Assuming that the motif was also employed on the seal of the governor of Harran (see above, n. 6), we may add to the list of highly-placed officials using this emblematic scene.

would function in other domains in which he was active.[18] The high status of individuals like Mušezib-Ninurta and Pan-Aššur-lamur could also account for why it is clearly the king with royal headgear who flanks the tree, and why the deity is visible within the winged disk, whereas on the uninscribed seals it is generally an undifferentiated personage without royal headgear and a simple winged disk that is indicated (compare figs. 12 and 14). Only further research into the correlations between office and seal-type in the Neo-Assyrian period, along with a study of the relative chronology of seals on tablets dated by *limmu* years and of distribution patterns for excavated examples will take us beyond speculation.[19] But it is conceivable that the proximity of this particular motif to the physical person of the ruler, both in the palace and on royal garments, was well known within official circles, and deemed appropriate for the seals precisely because the official using the seal would be acting for, or in governance of, the *state*. This would presumably have been in a distinct realm from that for which the lion-combat stamps, discussed above, were used—perhaps more political than bureaucratic or archival?

2.3. *Devotional Scenes*

When the king is represented in reliefs, he is usually identified visually by his royal 'tiara'—a high, apparently tiered, polos, often with a point or knob at the top (figs. 3, 9, 11, 13 and 15).[20] On seals such as that of Mušezib-Ninurta (fig. 14), then, the ruler is readily identified, as no one but he would be shown wearing the royal headdress. However, as we have seen, the same motif can also be rendered with a figure not-unlike

---

[18] Ursula Seidl has suggested that a seal with this motif from Bastam could have been associated with the prince in line to the throne (1979: 137f, cited by Paley 1986: 215). While the use of this theme could also be sought in conjunction with the office and household of the Assyrian crown prince, who would then be signalling his connection to the role he will ultimately play in the realm, it must be cautioned that the associations of one cultural tradition might not serve in the other.

[19] Such as attempted with a limited sample for Nimrud by Mallowan 1966: fig. 134; by Herbordt 1992: tables 2–3 for the "king and lion" stamp seals and other dated examples; and as observed by George 1986: 141 for the proximity of the gods' seals/tablets to the temples of Nabû at Assur and Nimrud.

[20] This is occasionally varied by a fillet decorated with a band of rosettes (e.g., Aššurbanipal in his garden scene, Moortgat 1969: fig. 287); however the same headgear can also be worn by the crown prince (as in the reign of Sennacherib, Parpola & Watanabe 1988: fig. 6), so additional evidence is required to identify the figure.

the ruler, in similar wrapped robe and shawl typical of court dress, but with no identifying headgear (fig. 12).

This is especially characteristic of motifs that include a pious figure before the symbol(s) or anthropomorphic form(s) of a deity or deities. When Sennacherib, wearing the royal crown, was represented in such a posture on the seal used by Esarhaddon for the latter's "Succession Treaty" (text fig. 3), it was shown to be the case that the seal was not necessarily his own, but rather that of the god Aššur, before whom he stood. By contrast, in the several instances of inscribed seals on which male figures stand before divine figures with no royal headdress, the inscriptions tell us explicitly that these are the seals of particular, named, officials.

This group thus constitutes a distinct genre within the Neo-Assyrian glyptic repertoire. Unlike the set of seals with 'sacred' tree, discussed just above, however, it does not seem to have direct correspondences with palace reliefs. A variant of the motif occurs in large-scale on the rock reliefs of Sennacherib, as noted previously, as well as on the Khorsabad painting of Residence K (Loud & Altman 1938: 84f.), and on small objects such as amulets (e.g., Parpola 1997: fig. 18, where a bare-headed individual stands before the seated figure of the goddess Ištar/Mulissu). But precisely because it is *not* found in the royal palace repertoire, the group constitutes an interesting counter-case to those seals that show the motif of figures flanking the tree and winged disk.

Variations of the devotional motif on seals occur within a relatively narrow range. The non-divine figures are male, bareheaded, in court dress, and can be shown either bearded or beardless. Bearded figures occur on two uninscribed cylinder seals in the Pierpont Morgan Library Collection, for example: one showing an individual between two deities—Adad on his bull, and a goddess on a dog- or lion-throne, with symbols of various other deities in the field (fig. 21); the other showing the devotee before a single deity—probably Adad, flanked by a pair of griffin-demons, with astral symbols in the upper field (fig. 18).

These two seals illustrate the standard compositional alternatives for the central motif on cylinders: a figure before a single deity or between a pair of deities. Additional divine symbols or ancillary elements are frequently added, although on stamp seals the motif is generally reduced to the dyadic pair of adorant/official and god (e.g., Curtis & Reade 1995: no. 192; Parker 1962: pl. XIX:4).[21] Occasionally a single figure

---

[21] Note Herbordt 1992: pl. 3.2:1–5 for stamps that show an additional devotee

may stand before, not between, a pair of deities, or to one side of a unit of facing deities (e.g., Collon 1987: nos. 342, 346).[22] The flanking griffin-demons of Morgan no. 702 (fig. 18) appear much as these creatures do on either side of the 'sacred' tree or opposite doorways in the royal palace.

In a number of instances, the primary unit of devotee-and-deity is inscribed within an architectural frame suggesting the physical sanctuary that would have housed the divine image before whom the devotional act would have been performed. In several cases those structures are also flanked by semi-divine creatures (for example, Collon 1987: nos. 343, 792; K. Watanabe 1993b: pl. 119:25f.; ibid. pl. 117:13f. = our figs. 19 and 20). Indeed, each of the examples cited introduces a different set of flanking figures: winged griffin-demons, bull-men, scorpion-men, winged male genii, frontal-faced 'hero'—all of whom have counterparts as protective figures flanking actual Neo-Assyrian palace doorways and facades (on which, see now Russell 1998: 690ff.), and seem to have also served similar functions on temples. On the facade of the Šarrat-nipḫi temple at Nimrud, for example, three tiers of winged genii and griffin-demons are arrayed on either side of the doorway colossi (Layard 1853: opp. 348). The use of these same figures flanking frames on the seals at once emphasizes and identifies the protected architectural space within which the depicted act of devotion is set, and further suggests that the free-standing griffin-demons on the Morgan Library seal who merely flank the core motif were also intended to signify the sanctified

---

standing behind the ruler, however, echoing the composition of the Residence K painting at Khorsabad. It is noteworthy that the dated Nimrud sealings (ibid. nos. 1–2) both come from the Northwest palace, known to have been used by Sargon, the tablet dates fall within the reign of Sargon II (716 and 719 B.C.E., resp.; ibid. 200f.), and that it is a ruler accompanied before the standing deity, not a beardless or bearded but bareheaded official. The ownership of these seals cannot be pursued in the present context; but I wonder whether these are not good candidates for the seal of the Crown Prince or his household?

[22] An unusual juxtaposition is found on a seal from Nineveh in the Iraq Museum (Collon, 1987: no. 812, K. Watanabe 1993b: pl. 118:18), where a beardless male figure stands to the left, facing a 'sacred tree' surmounted by a figured winged disk, while to the right is depicted the figure of a king making a comparable, salutary gesture, but enclosed within the elongated curvature of a royal stele. It is not entirely clear whether the beardless male includes both the tree and the stele in his gesture of devotion, or whether the official and the king-as-stele piously flank the central tree, as per the paired men who flank the tree on occasion (e.g., K. Watanabe 1993b: pl. 118:10 and 17). As the seal is uninscribed, although of high quality carving and valuable chalcedony (Collon 1987: 175, found among the foundation deposit of Sennacherib's palace), it does not advance our discussion, however interesting.

enclosure within which the confrontation between devotee and deity would have taken place. The visual reference on this group of seals thus seems to have shifted from palace to temple.[23]

The beardless figures in these scenes have been widely discussed in terms of their probable identity as court eunuchs (K. Watanabe 1992, 1993b: 304–308; Tadmor & Tadmor 1995: 350 and n. 18; and see now, the statue found at Til Barsib, similarly beardless and identically dressed, thought to be a eunuch official or even governor of the province—Roobaert 1996). Seal legends are essential in confirming this, identifying their owners explicitly as *ša rēši*/LÚ.SAG, "eunuch"—as, for example, the seals of Aššur-belu-uṣur and Nabû-šarru-uṣur (figs. 21 and 22).[24] At no time does identification of the individual in the legend as a eunuch accompany the representation of a bearded male. This suggests that the correlation between seal legend and image is strong, and that it is the eunuch seal owner himself, or a generic member of his class, that is being represented, markedly without the secondary sexual characteristic of the full-grown beard.

These eunuchs can be shown to have held quite high office—comparable to the status of the *limmu* Pan-Aššur-lamur, whose seal carried the motif of the central tree surmounted by a winged disk. The seal of Bel-ašaredu, beardless but undeclared, identifies him only as the important *rab ekalli*, overseer of the palace (Tadmor & Tadmor 1995: 352; Dalley & Postgate 1984). That of Aššur-belu-uṣur (fig. 21) identifies him as in the service of Nergal-ereš, the Governor of Raṣappa (on whom, Galter 1990), while the seal of Ištar-duri identifies him as in the service of a provincial governor, the *turtanu* Nergal-ilaya, who served as *limmu* in 817 and 808 (Millard 1994: 110). The seal legend further indicates that this last seal was a gift of a eunuch of king Adad-nerari

---

[23] We have little evidence for how the interiors of temples may have been decorated; whether the walls would also have incorporated devotional scenes, redundantly (re-) presenting the act of devotion that would have been carried out before the divine image itself, must remain moot. Barring such evidence, it makes more sense to think of the scenes depicted on the seals inside architectural frames as replicating devotional *acts* of the seal-owners, rather than replicating devotional *imagery*.

[24] See on this, Tadmor & Tadmor 1995: 349; K. Watanabe 1992. Other examples include the seals of Rimanni-ili (Collon 1987: no. 342); of his master, the governor of Nimrud, Bel-tarṣi-iluma (Parker 1955: pl. XXI:1); of Ištar-duri (Collon 1987: no. 343); of Adad-uṣur (ibid. no. 344 and Moortgat 1940: no. 596); of Ninurta-bel-uṣur from Assur (Moortgat 1940: no. 595); and of Tariba-Ištar (Parpola 1997: frontispiece).

III (K. Watanabe 1992: 364; Collon 1987: 77 re no. 343).[25] The seal of Nabû-uṣalla, whose seal shows a beardless individual before the goddess Ištar armed and standing upon a lion (K. Watanabe 1992: 357f.; Parpola 1997: fig. 10), identifies him as a governor of Tam(a)nuna and eunuch of Sargon II. The seal of Rimanni-ili identifies him as the eunuch of Bel-tarṣi-iluma, the governor of Kalhu/Nimrud (Collon 1987: 77, re no. 342; K. Watanabe 1992: pl. 71:a). His master, who held office from ca. 808–793, is identified as a eunuch of Adad-nerari (III) and served as *limmu* in 797 (Millard 1994: 35; K. Watanabe 1992: 365), possessed a seal belonging to the same group. An impression of his seal was found in the Governor's Palace at Nimrud, showing a (probably) beardless male facing a male deity mounted on a horned lion (Parker 1955: 111, pl. XXI:1; Herbordt 1992: 193, pl. 1:1; K. Watanabe 1992: pl. 70: d). Also found in the Governor's Palace was the seal of an individual who served or actually was the brother of this same governor (Parker 1955: pl. XX:2). A further seal of this group was found in the Ninurta temple at Nimrud, and belonged to one Aššur-bani, another governor of Nimrud/Kalḫu, who held the office of *limmu* under Sargon II in 713 (Parker 1962: 31, pl. XII:4; Millard 1994: 47). The seal of Adad-uṣur declares him the eunuch of one Mannu-ki-Aššur, probably to be identified as the *limmu* of 709 (Collon 1987: no. 344; K. Watanabe 1992: pl. 71:c).[26] A seal belonging to Nabû-nurka-lamur in the Walters Art Gallery (Paley 1986: fig. 13; K. Watanabe 1993b: no. 14 = our fig. 19), gives his office as superintendent, or chief official, of a man called Aḫua-amur, the third line designating either himself or his master as *nāgir ekalli*, "palace herald"—an important office which was often the fourth in line to hold the office of *limmu* in the reign of a given Assyrian king (Paley 1986: 219; Millard 1994: 9; and Sassmanhausen 1995). Interestingly, the seal of an Aḫua-amur is also preserved, which also belongs to this group showing beardless individuals before a deity within an architectural frame; however, the inscription provides only the minimal text: "Seal of Aḫua-amur" (Collon 1987: no. 792; K. Watanabe 1993b: 306, no. 13 = our fig. 20).

---

[25] Thereby dating the seal closer to the second eponymate of Nergal-ilaya, since Adad-nerari III took office in 810.

[26] Note, however, that an individual called Mannu-ki-Aššur is attested as eponym in 793, while the full writing of the eponym of 709 is Mannu-ki-Aššur-le'i (Millard 1994: 99). Collon (1987: 77) would probably prefer the later date for the seal on the basis of its style.

One of the most important of these seal-holders was Nabû-šarru-uṣur (fig. 22 = Buchanan 1966: no. 633), whose seal legend tells us he, too, was the "eunuch (LÚ.SAG) of Adad-nerari". Such an individual indeed served under Adad-nerari III, and held the post of *limmu* in 786 (Millard 1994: 37). His seal shows two individuals before the spade-emblem of Marduk mounted on a *mušḫuššu* and a seated goddess on couchant lion, presumably Ištar or Mulissu as Queen of Heaven, with deities in winged disk and sun- or star-burst in the upper field.[27]

Like the motives of lion-combat and attendants with tree and winged disk, the devotional theme was cut on stamp seals as well as on cylinders: e.g., one seal on an impressed bulla from the Northwest Palace at Nimrud, probably of the reign of Sargon II, showing a king and attendant/officer before two deities, probably Adad and Ištar (Parker 1955: 114, pl. XXII:5; Herbordt 1992: 200f, pl. 32:1–2); and another on dockets from Nineveh, showing the king and attendant before a single deity (Herbordt 1992: pl. 32:3–5). To my knowledge, however, none of the stamp seals bears an identifying inscription.

Seals of this group extend from the late 9th century at least into the reign of Sargon II (Tadmor & Tadmor 1995: 348; K. Watanabe 1992), clustering in the first half of the 8th century. Their distribution in time overlaps significantly with seals discussed previously, both those with the lion-combat motif, and those with attendants flanking the 'sacred' tree. Due to this overlap, it cannot be said that a given motif was chronologically distinct or successive to another; nor can it be demonstrated at present that one or another motif was utilized exclusively by individuals who held particular offices (such as that of *limmu*, for example).

---

[27] There was an individual of the same name who served as Chief Eunuch (LÚ. GAL-SAG) in the reign of Aššurbanipal (Kataja & Whiting 1995: nos. 26f.), who in that role apparently played some military role within the army of Aššurbanipal (Nissinen 1998: 47), and who appears among the post-canonical eponyms (post-846) as a palace scribe (Radner 1997: 113). There was also a Nabû-šarru-uṣur who served as commander, *rab kiṣri*, of the crown prince, probably under Esarhaddon (Nissinen 1998: 64, 148); and although he would have served Aššurbanipal, it is not certain he is the same individual who was ultimately elevated to the office of Chief Eunuch once Aššurbanipal was king. On this elusive personage, see Fales 1988, who provides a concordance of the attestations of this name. Dated mentions of him range from 671 to 650 (Nissinen 1998: n. 555). While there is clear evidence that some palace officials, including Chief Eunuchs, served in more than one reign (Kataja & Whiting 1995: no. 35, under Aššur-etelli-ilani and Aššurbanipal), it is not possible that the *limmu* of 786 under Adad-nerari could still have been active in the reign of Esarhaddon.

While, it has proven difficult to find inscribed cylinder seals or canonical examples of the devotional and 'sacred tree' motifs on cylinders in very late documents (e.g., Klengel-Brandt & Radner 1997, from Assur), and the Tadmors argue (1995: 349, n. 12) that named seals must have gone out of fashion or even more likely, out of the range of the permissable, the decorative style of some uninscribed examples suggests an extension into the 7th century as well (Porada 1948: 83–85).[28] One relatively late cylinder may well represent a development of the devotional scenes: that belonging to the *ša muḫḫi āli*, or "mayor" of Assur, used on a post-canonical tablet, hence after 648, sealed by three high officials of Assur (Klengel-Brandt & Radner 1997: 147, fig. 3 = our text fig. 4). The seal is divided into two horizontal registers: above, a bearded male stands before a couchant bull, winged disk and image of the goddess Ištar, with a griffin and moon crescent either behind him or behind the goddess; below, a pair of similar devotional figures stand flanking the emblems of Marduk and Nabû, adjacent to addorsed griffins and the sign of the seven *sibitti*. While it is likely that the seal is to be dated earlier than the tablet on stylistic grounds (ibid. 149), the division between emblems of the traditional gods of Assyria in the upper register (the bull of Adad, Ištar, and either Šamaš or Aššur, depending upon how one associates the winged disk—Herbordt 1992: 98–100), and the Babylonian deities Marduk and Nabû, whose popularity was relatively late in the Assyrian period, in the lower (Porter 1997), suggests that we might be able to correlate divine emblems or deities with political and religious fashion, and through them, identify seals that belong later in the sequence.

Stamp seals bearing devotional themes may tend to extend later in general distribution than the cylinders. At least one stamp with the motif reduced to an adorant facing a single deity is used as late as the reign of Sin-šar-iškun (ca. 623–612 B.C.E.; Parker 1962: 37, pl. XIX:4); while a conoid chalcedony stamp with the motif on one side and a secondary motif of a bull with back-turned head on the base is dated to the 7th century on typological grounds (Curtis & Reade

---

[28] The overlap of motif distribution apparently continues into the 7th century as well, as evident from a Nimrud tablet impressed with an uninscribed seal showing two men flanking a 'sacred tree' plant, with winged disk above, apparently belonging to a bird-catcher (Parker 1955: 115, fig. 6, pl. XXIII:2). The tablet is dated to the *limmu*-year (626 B.C.E.) of a late Nabû-šarru-uṣur, the seal's use thus likely contemporary with late devotional stamp seals.
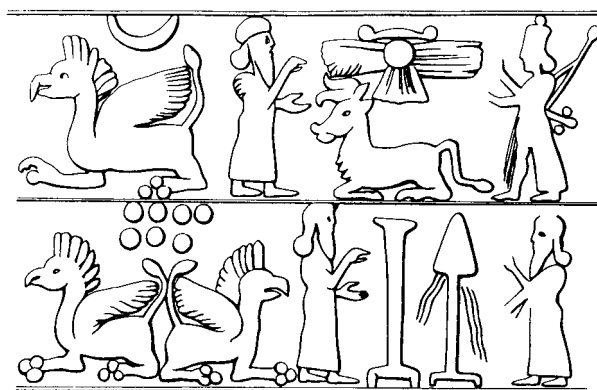
Text figure 4. Drawing of cylinder seal of the "mayor" of Assur: devotional scene of individuals in two registers before divine symbols (Assur, impressed on administrative tablet, mid-7th century B.C.E.; VAT 9398, Berlin; after Klengel-Brandt & Radner 1997: fig. 3).

1995: 187).[29] And finally, a stamp seal found at Nimrud, which shows a single devotee before the emblems of Marduk and Nabû with a moon-crescent above, appears on tablets that belong to an archive of the reign of Aššurbanipal (Parker 1955: 122, pl. XXVIII:3; Herbordt 1992: 183, pl. 3:2).[30]

What remains elusive are the socio-cultural mechanisms governing the association of particular motifs with particular offices or individuals. An unexpected consequence of a cursory study of the devotional scenes is that a weak correlation exists between the deity represented and the theophoric element in the seal owner's name. For example, on the seal of Ištar-duri, the beardless devotee/eunuch stands before an image of the goddess Ištar (Collon 1987: no. 343; Moortgat 1940:

---

[29] Those conoidal stamp seals that bear more than one motif (e.g., Curtis & Reade 1995: no. 192f) warrant special study, for if they were to have been worn on the person and used by a single individual, the range of motifs represented on a single stone could ultimately correlate with the range of activities or social roles of the seal-owner.

[30] Once again, it is important to reiterate that only with the publication of a large excavated corpus of impressed and dated tablets, as is envisioned for the Assur Project, will it ultimately be possible to correlate seals with sub-phases within the Neo-Assyrian period.

595); and on the seal of Adad-uṣur, the beardless male faces a male deity standing, on a bull, the attribute animal of the weather-god, Adad (Collon 1987: no. 344). Finally, on the seal of Ninurta-bel-uṣur, the male figure, whose head is unfortunately damaged, stands to the left of and gazes toward a scene of a striding deity mounted on horned and winged lion who shoots his bow and arrow toward a rampant horned and winged lion-demon (Moortgat 1940: no. 595). This motif occurs not-infrequently on uninscribed seals (e.g., Chester Beatty Library CB 75-080116; Morgan Library no. 689); but more important, it is closely related to the pair of reliefs known from a doorway of the Ninurta temple built by Aššurnaṣirpal II at Nimrud (Layard 1853: 348 = BM WAA 124571-2), and is thought to refer to the epic exploits of that deity (see Moortgat-Correns 1988). Thus, the Ištar-named eunuch confronts the goddess Ištar; the Adad-named eunuch confronts the god Adad; and the Ninurta-named official confronts standard iconography of the god Ninurta. These associations are not entirely consistent throughout the repertoire, as demonstrated by the seal of Nabû-nurka-lamur, whose name contains the theophoric element of the god Nabû, but whose seal shows the devotee within a sanctuary of the goddess Ištar. However, as several inscriptions are set irregularly around the imagery and seem to have been added after the carving of the motif (e.g., figs. 20 and 21), it is conceivable that individuals were making selections with such matches in mind. These examples that do exist hint at the possibility that there may well be a personal element in the choice of deity and expression of devotion manifest in this group of seals, just as the per-sonal element is likely indicted by the beardless devotee on the seals of eunuchs.

These seals therefore raise the question of the degree to which per-sonal identity may govern aspects of motif-selection, as distinct from more public signs of office. At the same time, the clusters of offices and motifs around the lion-combat seals, along with those of attendants with the tree and the devotional scenes, also suggest that certain motifs may have been correlated with administrative posts, and/or with specific domains of activity.

3. *Beyond Iconography: Sign and Referent*

It is now time to return to the question posed earlier: namely, just what is it that is being signaled when an official seal contains a motif associated with the person of the ruler, with the decorative program of the palace, or with prominent themes from more monumental art? In other words, what is the weight and significance of the *referential* in the iconography of these seals?

It will be remembered that the lion-combats featuring the ruler seem to have been deployed by those in the administrative system of the palace, and it was suggested that they purposefully and directly referenced the ruler, on whose behalf the palace administration was undertaken. Furthermore, it is possible that, by the use of 'insider signals' (e.g., literate punning), sub-sets of that administration could be signaled, such as using the scorpion as filler motif on the large triple-emblem lion-and-king seals to indicate the Queen's household (Collon 1995: 73, n. 6).

It will also be remembered that at least one *limmu* official utilized the 'sacred tree' motif on his seal, as did two governors, and it was suggested that this quotation of palace iconography exemplifying the welfare of the state through proper action of the ruler would serve to forcefully signal action on behalf of the state bureaucracy. The motif cannot be identified directly with the exercise of the office of the *limmu* officials who served the state, however, since at least three other individuals known to have held that office possessed seals showing devotional attitudes before deities: Bēl-tarṣi-iluma (in 797), Nabû-šarru-uṣur (in 786), and Aššur-bani (in 713).[31]

An unusually large number of highly-placed individuals bore seals with similar devotional scenes—four in the service of *limmu* officials and/or in the service of the governors of Kalhu/Nimrud, Assur, Raṣappa, and Tam(a)nūna, two eunuchs (*ša rēši*) of Adad-nerari III and one of Sargon II, a *rab ekalli* and a *nāgir ekalli* (palace herald). Virtually all of these individuals—including the *limmu* officials—also chose to identify themselves as eunuchs in their seal legends and/or were depicted as

---

[31] This would suggest that *other* offices and roles governed the selection of seal-motif, especially as no seals have been found inscribed with the title of *limmu*, for use during the official period, nor are there temporary seals inscribed with a personal name and that title for use by a particular official during the course of his office (see on practice, Renger 1977).

beardless men in devotional posture. In a rare instance, the legend tells us that yet a third recorded eunuch of Adad-nerari III, one Bīrtāyā, made a gift of this same type of seal to another eunuch, Ištar-duri. Here, the question must be raised whether this 'class' of men would have had an identifiable 'class' of seal. At the same time, such persons may have exercised a degree of personal choice in the range of acceptable variation around a central theme, particularly with respect to the theophoric elements in their own names.

All of these rather tentative observations are dependant to varying degrees upon the recognition of subject matter on the seals—traditionally the domain of 'iconography' within the discipline of art history.

That analytical domain was articulated in the classic studies of Panofsky (1939, 1955), and has been summarized often in the art historical literature (for example, Bialostocki 1973, Dittmann 1967). On Panofsky's terms, the analysis entails a three-step process: "pre-iconographical description"; theme-recognition, generally text-based and rooted in convention (termed "iconography" proper); and ascription of meaning (what Panofsky called "iconological interpretation", 1955: 40f.).

The first two stages have been incorporated into ancient Near Eastern studies throughout, whether unstated (e.g., Frankfort 1939) or explicitly (e.g., Sass & Uehlinger 1993). The third stage entails far more slippery operations—to some extent universalizing by Panofsky's own declaration that the process is grounded in "familiarity with the *essential tendencies of the human mind*" (emphasis his); and yet, tied to the "history of *cultural symptoms* or *symbols*", which, under specific conditions, were expressed by particular *themes* and *concepts* (again, emphasis his; 1955: 41). Here, Panofsky seems to conflate general, species responses with culturally- and historically-specific moments; and indeed the inconsistencies in his schema have been the subject of critical analyses in recent years (e.g., Gombrich 1972; Hasenmueller 1978; Klein 1979; Moxey 1986; Bal 1991).

What most of these critics have advocated is the disaggregation of various conflated moments in the analytical phases articulated by Panofsky. Van Straten, for example (1986: 172), calls for a division of the second stage into two separate parts: "iconographical description", meaning type-recognition, or classification; followed by "iconographical interpretation", which would reveal meaning ascribed to the "type". He explicitly chooses not to address "iconological interpretation", however, where it seems to me he is equally guilty of conflation: in this case, of a given artist's intentions with a period's ascription of

deeper levels of contextualized meaning. Moxey (1986: 266) takes on
the concept of "iconology" and the larger problem of interpretation,
as an attempt "to understand a work within the conceptual framework
of the historical period in which it was produced." He then proceeds
to demonstrate the ways in which the "iconological method" does not
do justice to historical understanding: first, by generalizing too quickly,
and second, by failing to find a way to articulate the "unsaid that is
laid before the eyes by the said" (ibid. 267). Specifically, Panofsky's
ascription of "synthetic intuition" as the means by which iconological
meaning could be plumbed is itself an artifact of an assumption of
transparency across cultural and temporal boundaries, the origins of
which lay in humanistic studies of the 19th century.

Clearly, for today's scholarly environment, other methodological
tools than intuition, however synthetic, are required to address what
is now recognized as the lack of transparency across time and space.
Different demands are placed upon evidence in order to elicit histori-
cal attitudes, and analysis has expanded to insist upon the multiplicity
of social spheres within a given period. In addition, where Panofsky's
system failed "to recognize the function of the work of art as an *actor*..."
(Moxey 1986: 271), it is now important to acknowledge the agency of
the work (in our case, the seal) as an active, not a passive, phenomenon
in communicating information and in shaping experience.

Gombrich (1972: 20f.) stressed the contextual limits of Panofsky's
system, arguing that "iconology must start with a study of institu-
tions rather than symbols". He then insisted on the importance of the
particular "genre" (or "field", cf. Klein 1979: 143–161) as setting the
frame within which a given symbolic code is to be read. Recognition
of genre then constitutes an important aspect of decoding iconogra-
phy; and within such sub-classes, as pointed out by Bal with respect to
Northern European painting (1991: esp. 214), images have an active
relationship with other images, not just with the textual sources of
their own imagery![32]

Bal further makes the point that mere motif recognition as the end
of iconographic decipherment contains within itself both inherent
limitations and inherent biases: if based only upon previous exempla,

---

[32] The grounding of images in a tradition of imagery with respect to earlier Meso-
potamian art is also discussed by Keel (1992: 20–23 and appendix, esp. 269), where
he takes up the relationship between Panofsky's theoretical framework and our field's
analytical tradition.

readings tend to be conservative, emphasizing membership in tradition over innovation; the analytical process privileges the tracking of motifs *back* to their sources, rather than dealing with contemporary reception; and the analysis then tends *a priori* to be a-political. To my mind there is an equally important critique, which addresses the tendency to find consistency in meaning along with consistency in form, thereby ignoring the potential polyvalence of images and the possibility that they may carry different meanings in different sub-spheres of society—political, religious, economic, social—as well as when included in different 'genres'.

All of these points have relevance for our inquiry into the seals as carriers of meaning in the mass-media of the early 1st millennium B.C.E.: first, consciousness of the tendency to conflate steps of description and ascription of meaning; second, understanding of the image-bearing work as *active* in conveying meaning to its audience, however defined; and third, the importance of *genre*, or 'type', in order to factor in any additional associations to which the specific motif could be subject.

Yet, even these three points do not exhaust the problems one faces in dealing with the iconography of our seals. A further constraint lies in the fact that Panofsky's schema distinguishing iconography from iconology was developed with respect to Italian Renaissance painting, such that most subsequent art historical critiques have equally directed their analysis of its limitations to its application to European painting. In that leveled field, the medium remains constant, whatever the additional elements of context, genre or function of the individual work and/or the motifs it employs. The criticisms summarized above are ever more salient as one crosses media, where added variables of function, audience and social context must also be factored into meaning.

It is not a trivial problem of Panofsky's system, therefore, that, while acknowledging the need for a text in order to move from seeing thirteen men sitting around a dinner table to seeing "The Last Supper" (1955: 31), he essentially reduced all Italian Renaissance representations of "The Last Supper" to the same field of meaning. For our problem of understanding the imagery on Neo-Assyrian seals, it is essential to keep in mind that the motif of the king and semi-divine creatures flanking a tree, for example, probably bore intrinsic meaning consistent within the period in relation to the well-being of the land; however, when placed behind the royal throne, it evoked a specific domain of signification within the politics of royal display, and when used on an administrative seal, the same motif functioned within quite another

domain of signification: the administrative and bureaucratic. In this latter domain, the fact of a recognizable reference to a pivotal motif in a royal throneroom becomes additive, if not primary.[33]

This additional layer of meaning is incorporated by Hasenmueller into her critique of Panofsky's system, to which she introduces semiotic theory as a necessary corrective. She notes (1978: 293) that Panofsky reduced the meaning of art to an association between representation and represented, without adequately dealing with the *act of representation* itself; and observes that "The conclusion that representation 'means' what is represented…is manifestly unsatisfactory." Hasenmueller further distinguishes between image and motif, in order to demonstrate that Panofsky's system, once a *motif* is labeled, still requires a discrete step that will relate a given *image* employing that motif to the system of representation within which it functions, and to other images with which it may be in discourse (ibid. 294).

Hasenmueller's discussion of "meaning expressed *by representing*" (ibid. 293, emphasis hers) introduces the notion of the sign central to semiotics—the additive sign in our case being the (f)act of referencing a key throneroom motif, or the king himself, or piety to the gods, on seals to be used as marks of individuals with specific identities and roles in society. The variables of identity and role to be considered include the office(s) and class of the seal owner, his personal taste or biography, and local or regional fashion,[34] all of which may be relevant in the determination of a given seal's iconography.

When it is then observed that the iconography manifest in one medium (e.g., seals) finds parallels in other media (e.g., palace reliefs), it is the signal to move to the next set of questions. These include whether the observed commonality represents mutual participation in a shared system of meaning and reference (as, for example, one could argue for the theme of the king and tree appearing both in large scale behind the ruler on his throne in the throneroom of the Northwest Palace and in

---

[33] And as such, seriously challenges the primacy given by Panofsky to textual mapping in the analytical process of the image, as distinct from the visual referents alluded to within the given representational system.

[34] This last constitutes a major unexamined category in the present study. The recent publications of Homès-Fredericq (1986), Marcus (1996) and Kühne (1997), and the 1991 colloquium that produced the volume edited by Sass & Uehlinger (1993) suggest that a variety of "provincial" seal styles and types may be recognizable, particularly when imagery is studied in conjunction with sealings from excavated contexts within the Assyrian sphere of activity.

miniature on the ruler's garment over his breast, figs. 15 and 16);[35] whether a literal replication may signal dependent associations (as we suggest for the same motif on seals, fig. 14); or whether demonstrable reduction or variation of a common core motif signals something quite other, the shift in intensity or emphasis co-varying with the shift in medium, toward a difference in intention or meaning.[36] In any case, the point is that it is crucial to add these determinations of membership, dependency or independence to any consideration of meaning.[37]

In stressing the 'sign' value of the seal's imagery in relation to other imagery, as well as in relation to contemporary systems of meaning, the problem of decipherment is raised from the level of mere content (i.e., iconography, or *what* is represented), beyond even iconology in Panofsky's terms (the associative *meaning* of the imagery represented), to the fully *semiotic*: the *signification* of what is represented.

In the Neo-Assyrian period, correspondence between seal motifs and 'official' monumental art, or between seal motifs and direct reference to the ruler, appears more likely the higher the status of the seal-holder/office within in the administrative hierarchy, just as inscribed seals seem to reflect higher status than uninscribed seals, situating the seal holder within the administrative or religious hierarchy. But because the seal functions in a domain quite different from that of monumental art, when a given palace motif appears reproduced on an official seal, it must be read both (and simultaneously) for its pure content value and also for its *referential* value to the reliefs.[38] In this way, at least for the most obvious case of seals with tree and winged disk motif, but perhaps also for other

---

[35] This function can also move across media, as recently demonstrated by F. Prado-Vilar (1997) for 10th century ivory pyxides from Andalusia that performed the same function as that of monumental iconography in projecting the political program of the state.

[36] Important in this regard is the point made by Keel (1990) with respect to another class of artifact, amulets, which share motifs with large-scale art of the 2nd and 1st centuries B.C.E. in Israel/Palestine. There, he notes, one often sees unparalleled combinations and/or simplified compositions—which he attributes to the desire, specific to the protective properties of amulets, to accumulate as many positive forces as possible on the smallest possible surface (see commentary on Keel by Kippenberg 1990: xv).

[37] Note that "reference" is generally not reciprocal: one does not necessarily think of "seals" when one looks at the palace throneroom reliefs; but one *does* think of palace reliefs when one sees certain seals…

[38] This formulation implies a hierarchy of genres in the period, giving primacy to the reliefs, which can be supported through recognition of the supreme power vested in the ruler; hence administrators' association with *him*, as distinct from his association with *them*, which would suggest in turn that *their* image-systems and tokens reference *him*, and not the reverse.
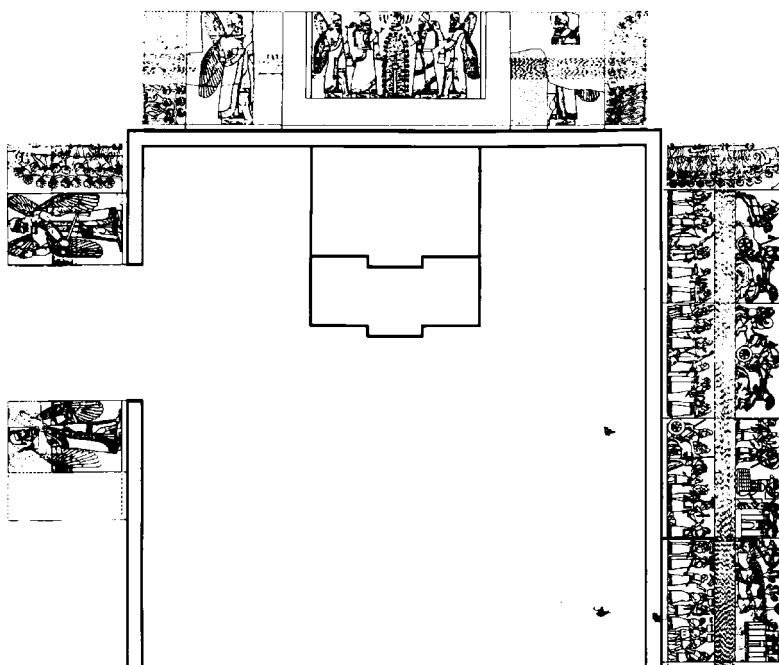
Text figure 5. Layout of reliefs in Throneroom (B) of Northwest Palace of Aššurnaṣirpal II (883–857 B.C.E.) (Nimrud, detail east end; after Winter 1981: fig. 2).

motifs, such as the bull hunt, standing or seated ruler, even the winged genii (see text fig. 5 for the conspicuous sampling of these motifs appearing in throneroom B of the Northwest Palace), the *palais imaginaire* of our title is constructed on the tablet/docket/bulla through the referencing of the *palais réel* (as evoked in the 19th c. reconstruction, fig. 23). For other cases cited, the administrative seals showing king-and-lion combats effectively establish authoritative identity within the official state apparatus through allusion to the ruler's identity; while the devotional scenes may very well represent the statement of an autonomous persona on the part of the court eunuchs, whose claim to power, like the king's own (Winter 1997), was asserted to lay in a special relation to the divine. Indeed, one might even see this last as a politically conscious (and seditious?) act—an end run around royal authority per se, subtly choreographed and reinforced through gifting, by a powerful and strongly identified block within the state system (Grayson 1995).

One last consideration distinguishes the case of seals in general, and our Neo-Assyrian seals in particular: that of their dual identity as object (*seal*) and product (*sealing*). Here, the semiotic theory of Charles Sanders Peirce, more than that of Saussure, Leach and others mentioned by Hasenmueller, is particularly illuminating, as it accounts for both the iconic nature of the seal's relationship to its owner's identity/authority and the indexical nature of the relationship between the parent seal and its imprint (Peirce 1931: §§ 303–308). For, if the iconic sign relates to its referent by likeness or identity, while the indexical sign has an existential or causal connection to its referent (Kippenberg 1990: ix), then as the seal represents and thereby constitutes the *sign* of its owner, so the sealing is the mark of and thereby constitutes the *sign* of the seal.

I have attempted to delineate elsewhere the degree to which visual motif and verbal legend worked on the seal to signal official function and status within the state hierarchy (Winter 1987). That the seal itself has 'sign-value' in our period is suggested by the number of instances in which the cuneiform legend on the seals was inscribed in positive, to be read from the object, rather than in negative, to permit reading in the impression. This phenomenon has been observed by scholars working on the Assyrian seals (e.g., K. Watanabe 1992: 363ff). I would say that this is clear evidence, not that the seals were never meant to be impressed, but rather that they were, in themselves, *signs*. This double valence of the seal is vested in the fact that, to the extent that the seal represents the seal-holder's place and authority as a token, the act of sealing carries, and the resultant impression serves as an index of, the full authority of that place and authority held by the seal-owner.

I believe the above distinction has implications on several counts for our understanding of the Neo-Assyrian seals under discussion, in that it supports a role for the seals substantially different from that of other motif-bearing media. In the case of shared or related motifs between Assyrian seals and reliefs, for example, whatever the function of the palace program, other royal monuments, and possible temple programs as well, it becomes ever more evident that the seals had to have had their own economy of value. One such indicator of that value is encapsulated in Esarhaddon's Succession Treaty, when we are told that the seal "cannot be altered". It is also apparent on the later tablets of Aššurbanipal and his son that granted exemption from taxes to favored officials, where violation of the terms of the agreement is expressed in terms of contravention of the royal seal used to validate the agreement.

Toward the end of these texts, in asserting the perpetuity of the grant, future princes/rulers are explicitly instructed: "Do not act negligently against the seal…" (e.g., Kataja & Whiting 1995: nos. 25, 26 and 30, rev. 17: [T]A *pān unqi nadî aḫi lā tarašši*).[39]

The fact that in this context stress is placed less on the royal *word* than on the affirming validity of the official state *seal* attests to the authority of the seal as surrogate for the authority of the individual wielding it. It did not just passively witness the temporal event of the grant, but actually and actively stood as the durative sign of continuing validity. I would argue that this would be true not only if and when used by the ruler, but equally when used by administrative and bureaucratic officials. As such, while the seal as a physical artifact meets the conditions of Peirce's *iconic* sign, which stands by likeness or identity for the object of reference (the owner), the sealing as an artifact of the seal meets the extended condition of an *indexical* sign, caused by the active icon.

The associative, if not generative force of these seals, then, was not inconsiderable. It could be hypothesized that those with inscriptions could have been considered to be particularly forceful, by virtue of their double articulation of identity: imagery plus specifics of personal data; and indeed there is evidence to support such a hypothesis. Special attention is given inscribed seals in Assyrian dream-omens (reported by Cassin 1987b: 272–4, citing Oppenheim 1956: 276, 322). To cite but one instance, it is written: "If (in the dream) one gives him (the dreamer) an inscribed seal, he will have (either) a 'name' or a 'son'—a legitimate son." Indeed, in a number of the omens there is a clear symbolic equation established between seals and human issue, especially "legitimate sons". As Cassin herself notes, "in biological terms", the seal is the symbolic equivalent of a direct descendant.

This equation may take on special meaning for the class of seals belonging to eunuchs, who by definition produce no biological issue. This was a vexing problem for eunuchs, both in terms of inheritance and succession, as reflected in a number of ancient texts (cf. Ahiqar 1:6–8, Cowley 1923: 220, and discussion for Mesopotamia by H. Tadmor 1995: esp. 321f. and n. 6). To a significant extent, the seals, no less than offspring, serve as living extensions of the self. That this was not merely on the metaphoric level may be indicated by the reference in

---

[39] Note that while Kataja and Whiting add "…(royal) seal" in translation, the Akkadian preserves only the word "seal" (*unqu*).

Isaiah 56:5, in which the eunuch is promised an "enduring *name* that shall not be cut off", which word in Hebrew (as noted by Tadmor, ibid. 321) is a play on the Akkadian word for "seed" or offspring. For what, after all, is an inscribed seal than a permanent record of one's name? In short, the particular situation of the eunuch may well help to understand the direct relationship with the gods claimed in the seals' iconography. Their "legitimate issue", as in the dream omens, would then be, through their work, manifest in (the indexical imprint of) their seals.

In the end, what I would hope to have demonstrated is that all 'iconography' is not equal, just as all manifestations of the same motif are not equal. In an attempt to reconstruct the signification of seal imagery, and, through iconographic analysis, to fix the potential meaning of some individual motifs, I have argued that one cannot ignore typology, or scale, reducing all instances of a common motif to a single meaning independent of medium. This Malraux understood well, when he noted that the photographic "agrandissement des sceaux…crée de véritables *arts fictifs*" (1965: 96, emphasis his). The particular vehicle of conveyance, its function and its nature, must then be considered when seeking 'meaning' in the visual sphere.

In addressing the specific issue of the meaning of seal imagery in the mass-media of the 1st millennium B.C.E., it is important to remember that seals, worn and displayed as tokens, then proliferated through their sealings, probably *did* constitute the primary visual medium of the age, as suggested by Amiet. Once the major assemblages of dated texts and their sealings have been systematically studied, what we call the Neo-Assyrian Period will probably be seen as subject to significant historical development in the relationship between seal and palace iconography. For the present, correlations between palace reliefs and seals seem strongest in the earlier phase, that is, the 9th century B.C.E. Later on, in the 8th and 7th centuries, a more independent and varied repertoire seems to have emerged along with the proliferation of the stamp seal; and I should be very surprised if this were not tied directly to changes in and expansion of administrative roles in the growing Empire. Nevertheless, throughout, the 'palace' evoked by some seal imagery had to exist in the minds both of the administrator/seal owner associated with the institution and the viewer for whom the seal was the mark of official authority, in order for the imagery to do its job. Finally, in cases of both continuity and change, homology and variance, within the Neo-Assyrian period, it must be stressed that the specific 'sign'-value

of the seal-as-such needs to be added to any study of the meaning of the iconographic repertoire. That 'sign'-value is to be distinguished from the 'sign'-value of palace reliefs and other works of monumental scale—even, or perhaps especially, in those cases where identical motifs are represented. For this reason, it would seem essential *not* to let the modern ethos of the elision of scale via photographic reproduction, as signaled so aptly by Malraux, obscure the discrete, if overlapping, socio-political domains in which seals and large sculptural monuments functioned in the ancient Near East. As Marshall McLuhan declared in the 1960's, "*the medium is* (at least part of) *the message*."

Acknowledgments

Bibliography

Amiet, P., 1973, *Bas-reliefs imaginaires de l'Ancien Orient d'après les cachets et les sceaux-cylin-dres*, Paris.

Auerbach, E., 1991, Heirloom Seals and Political Legitimacy in Late Bronze Age Syria, *Akkadica* 74–75, 19–36.

Bachmann, W., 1927, *Felsreliefs in Assyrien: Bawian, Maltai und Gunduk* (WVDOG 52), Leipzig (repr. Osnabrück).

Bal, M., 1991, *Reading "Rembrandt": Beyond the Word-Image Opposition*, Cambridge.

Barnett, R. D., 1974, Lions and Bulls in Assyrian Palaces, in: P. Garelli (ed.), *Le Palais et la royauté* (XIXᶜ Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale), Paris, 441–446.

——, 1977, *Sculptures from the North Palace of Aššurbanipal at Nineveh*, London.

Bialostocki, J., 1973, s.v. *Iconography*, in: *Dictionary of the History of Ideas*, New York, 524–541.

Bleibtreu, E., 1980, *Die Flora der neuassyrischen Reliefs* (Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes, Sonderband I), Wien.

——, 1994, Festungsanlagen auf neuassyrischen Rollsiegeln und Siegelabrollungen, in: M. Dietrich & O. Loretz (eds.), *Beschreiben und Deuten in der Archäologie des Alten Orients* (FS R. Mayer-Opificius; AVO 4), Münster, 7–14.

Börker-Klähn, J., 1982, *Altvorderasiatische Bildstelen und vergleichbare Felsreliefs* (BaF 4), Mainz.

Braun-Holzinger, E., 1994, Zum Schalgewand Nr. 2, in: P. Calmeyer et al. (eds.), *Beiträge zur altorientalischen Archäologie und Altertumskunde* (FS B. Hrouda), Wiesbaden, 31–41.

Buchanan, B., 1966. *Catalogue of Ancient Near Eastern Seals in the Ashmolean Museum. Vol. I: Cylinder Seals*, Oxford.

Canby, J. V., 1971, Decorated Garments in Ashurnasirpal's Sculpture, *Iraq* 33, 31–53.

Canby, S., 1998, *Princes, Poets & Paladins: Islamic and Indian Paintings from the Collection of Prince and Princess Sadruddin Aga Khan*, London.

Cassin, E., 1987a (orig., 1981), Le roi et le lion, in: ead., *Le semblable et le différent. Symbolisme du pouvoir dans le Proche-Orient ancien*, Paris, 167–213.

——, 1987b, Le sceau: un fait de civilisation, ibid. 267–279.

Collon, D., 1987, *First Impressions: Cylinder Seals in the Ancient Near East*, London.

——, 1995, Filling Motifs, in: U. Finkbeiner et al. (eds.), *Beiträge zur Kulturgeschichte Vorderasiens* (FS R. M. Boehmer), Mainz, 69–76.

——, 1998, "How Seals were Worn", Lecture at Yale University, 10 July.

Cowley, A., 1923, *Aramaic Papyri of the 5th century B.C.*, Oxford.

Curtis, J. E. & Reade, J. E., 1995, *Art and Empire: Treasures from Assyria in the British Museum*, New York.

Dalley, S. & Postgate, J. N., 1984, *The Tablets from Fort Shalmaneser* (CTN III), London.

Delaporte, L., 1910, *Catalogue des cylindres orientaux....de la Bibliothèque Nationale*, Paris.

Dittmann, L., 1967, *Stil, Symbol, Struktur. Studien zur Kategorien der Kunstgeschichte*, München.

Fales, F. M., 1988, Prosopography of the Neo-Assyrian Empire, 2: The many faces of Nabû-šarru-uṣur, *SAAB* 2, 105–124.

Frankfort, H., 1939, *Cylinder Seals*, London.

Galter, H., 1990, Eine Inschrift des Gouverneurs Nergal-ēreš in Yale, *Iraq* 52, 47–48.

George, A. R., 1986, Sennacherib and the Tablet of Destinies, *Iraq* 48, 133–146.

Gombrich, E. H., 1972, Introduction: Aims and Limits of Iconology, in: id., *Symbolic Images: Studies in the Art of the Renaissance*, London, 1–22.

Grayson, A. K., 1976, *Assyrian Royal Inscriptions. Vol. II*, Wiesbaden.

——, 1991, *Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia. Vol. 2: Assyrian Rulers of the Early First Millennium*, Toronto.

——, 1995, Eunuchs in Power: Their Role in the Assyrian Bureaucracy, in: M. Dietrich & O. Loretz (eds.), *Vom Alten Orient zum Alten Testament* (FS W. von Soden; AOAT 240), Kevelaer & Neukirchen-Vluyn, 85–98.

Greenfield, J., 1962, Studies in Aramaic Lexicography I, *JAOS* 82, 290–299.

——, 1995, Wisdom of Ahiqar, in: J. Day et al. (eds.), *Studies in Old Testament Wisdom* (FS J. A. Emerton), Cambridge, 43–52.

Hasenmueller, C., 1978, Panofsky, Iconography, and Semiotics, *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 36, 289–301.

Herbordt, S., 1992, *Neuassyrische Glyptik des 8.–7. Jh. v. Chr.* (SAAS I), Helsinki.

——, 1996, Ein Königssiegel Assurnasirpals II. (?) aus Assur, *BaM* 27, 411–417.

Homès-Fredericq, D., 1986, La glyptique des archives inedites d'un centre provincial de l'empire assyrien aux Musées Royaux d'Art et d'Histoire, Bruxelles, *CRRA* 30, 247–259.

Kataja, L. & Whiting, R., 1995, *Grants, Decrees and Gifts of the Neo-Assyrian Period* (SAA XII), Helsinki.

Keel, O., 1990, Ptah auf Siegelamuletten aus Palästina/Israel, *Visible Religion* 7, 199–232.

——, 1992, *Das Recht der Bilder, gesehen zu werden* (OBO 122), Freiburg Schweiz & Göttingen.

Kippenberg, H. G., 1990, Introduction: The Genre Concept in Iconography, *Visible Religion* 7, vii–xix.

Klein, R., 1979, *Form and Meaning*, trans. M. Jay & L. Wiesteltier, New York.

Klengel-Brandt, E., 1994, Ein königliches Siegel aus Assur, in: P. Calmeyer et al. (eds.), *Beiträge zur altorientalischen Archäologie und Altertumskunde* (FS B. Hrouda), Wiesbaden, 147–149.

Klengel-Brandt, E. & Radner, K., 1997, Die Stadtbeamten von Assur und ihre Siegel, in: S. Parpola & R. M. Whiting (eds.), *Assyria 1995. Proceedings of the 10th Anniversary Symposium of the Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project Helsinki, September 7–11, 1995*, Helsinki, 137–159.

Kühne, H., 1997, Der Gott in der Mondsichel, *Altorientalische Forschungen* 24, 375–382.

Layard, A. H., 1849, *Monuments of Nineveh*, London.

——, 1853, *Discoveries in the Ruins of Nineveh and Babylon*, New York.

Livingstone, A., 1986, *Mystical and Mythological Explanatory Works of Assyrian and Babylonian Scholars*, Oxford.

Loud, G. & Altman, C. B., 1938, *Khorsabad. Vol. II: The Citadel and the Town* (OIP 40), Chicago.

Mallowan, M. E. L., 1966, *Nimrud and its Remains. Vol. I*, Aberdeen.

Malraux, A., 1965 (1947), *Le Musée imaginaire*, Paris.

Marcus, M. I., 1996, *Emblems of Identity and Prestige: The Seals and Sealings from Hasanlu, Iran* (UMM 84; Hasanlu Special Studies III), Philadelphia.

Matthiae, P., 1998, *Nineve*, Milan.

Maul, S., 1995, Das 'dreifache Königtum'—Überlegungen zu einer Sonderform des neuassyrischen Königssiegels, in: U. Finkbeiner et al. (eds.), *Beiträge zur Kulturgeschichte Vorderasiens* (FS R. M. Boehmer), Mainz, 395–402.

Millard, A. R., 1965, The Assyrian Royal Seal Type Again, *Iraq* 27, 12–16.

——, 1978, The Assyrian Royal Seal: An Addendum, *Iraq* 40, 70.

——, 1980–83, s. v. Königssiegel, *RLA* 6, 136–7.

——, 1994, *The Eponyms of the Assyrian Empire, 910–612 B.C.* (SAAS 2), Helsinki.

Moortgat, A., 1940, *Vorderasiatische Rollsiegel*, Berlin.

——, 1969, *The Art of Ancient Mesopotamia*, London—New York.

Moortgat-Correns, U., 1988, Ein Kultbild Ninurtas aus neuassyrischer Zeit, *AfO* 35, 117–133.

Moxey, K., 1986, Panofsky's Concept of "Iconology" and the Problem of Interpretation in the History of Art, *New Literary History* 17, 265–274.

Nissinen, M., 1998, *References to Prophecy in Neo-Assyrian Sources* (SAAS VII), Helsinki.

Oppenheim, A. L., 1956, *Interpretation of Dreams in the Ancient Near East*, Chicago.

Otto, A., 1998, The Collapse of the Balance of Power in the Middle of the 18th century B.C. and its reflection in Syro-Mesopotamian Glyptic, Paper given at the 1st International Congress of the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East, Rome.

Paley, S., 1986, Inscribed Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian Cylinder Seals and Impressions, in: M. Kelly-Buccellati (ed.), *Insight through Images* (FS E. Porada; BiM 21), Malibu, 209–220.

Panofsky, E., 1939, *Studies in Iconology*, New York.

——, 1955, Iconography and Iconology: An Introduction to the study of Renaissance Art, in: id., *Meaning in the Visual Arts*, Garden City, NY, 26–54.

Parker, B., 1955, Excavations at Nimrud, 1949–1953, *Iraq* 17, 93–125.

——, 1962, Seals and Seal Impressions from the Nimrud Excavations, 1955–1958, *Iraq* 24, 26–40.

Parpola, S., 1997, *Assyrian Prophecies* (SAA IX), Helsinki.

Parpola, S. & Watanabe, K., 1988, *Neo-Assyrian Treaties and Loyalty Oaths* (SAA II), Helsinki.

Peirce, C. S., 1931, *Collected Papers. Vol. 2*, Cambridge.

Porada, E., 1948, *Corpus of Ancient Near Eastern Seals in North American Collections I: The Pierpont Morgan Library*, Washington D.C.

Porter, B. N., 1993, Sacred Trees, Date Palms and the Royal Persona of Ashurnasirpal II, *JNES* 52, 129–139.

——, 1997, The Relative Status of Nabû and Marduk in the Late Assyrian Period, in: S. Parpola & R. M. Whiting (eds.), *Assyria 1995. Proceedings of the 10th Anniversary Symposium of the Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project Helsinki, September 7–11, 1995*, Helsinki, 253–260.

Postgate, J. N., 1969, *Neo-Assyrian Royal Grants and Decrees* (Studia Pohl, Series Maior 1), Rome.

——, 1973, *The Governor's Palace Archive*, London.

Prado-Vilar, F., 1997, Circular Visions of Fertility and Punishment: Caliphal Ivory Caskets from al-Andalus, *Muqarnas* 14, 19–41.

Radner, K., 1997, *Die neuassyrischen Privatrechtsurkunden als Quelle für Mensch und Umwelt* (SAAS VI), Helsinki.

Reade, J. E., 1963, A Glazed Brick Panel from Nimrud, *Iraq* 25, 38–47.

Renger, J., 1977, Legal Aspects of Sealing in Ancient Mesopotamia, in: M. Gibson & R. D. Biggs (eds.), *Seals and Sealing in the Ancient Near East*, Malibu, 75–88.

Roobaert, A., 1996, A Neo-Assyrian Statue from Til Barsib, *Iraq* 58, 79–87.

Rothman, M. S., 1994, Sealing as a Control Mechanism in Prehistory: Tepe Gawra XI, X and VII, in: G. Stein & M. S. Rothman (eds.), *Chiefdoms and Early States in the Near East: The Organizational Dynamics of Complexity* (Monographs in World Archaeology, 18), Madison, WI, 103–120.

Russell, J. M., 1998, The Program of the Palace of Assurnasirpal II at Nimrud: Issues in the Research and Presentation of Assyrian Art, *AJA* 102, 655–715.

Sachs, A. J., 1953, The Late Assyrian Royal Seal Type, *Iraq* 15, 167–170.

Sass, B. & Uehlinger, C. (eds.), 1993, *Studies in the Iconography of Northwest Semitic Inscribed Seals* (OBO 125), Fribourg & Göttingen.

Sassmanhausen, L., 1995, Funktion und Stellung der Herolde (NAGIR/*nāgiru*) im Alten Orient, *BaM* 26, 85–194.

Seidl U., 1979, Die Siegelbilder, in: W. Kleiss, Bastam 1: Ausgrabungen in den urartäischen Anlagen 1972–1975 (Teheraner Forschungen 4), Berlin, 137–149.

Stearns, J. B., 1961, *Reliefs from the Palace of Ashurnasirpal II* (AfO.B 15), Graz.

Tadmor, H., 1991, On the Role of Aramaic in the Assyrian Empire, in: M. Mori et al. (eds.), *Near Eastern Studies Dedicated to H.I.H. Prince Takahito Mikasa*, Wiesbaden, 419–426.

——, 1995, Was the Biblical *sārîs* a Eunuch?, in: Z. Zevit et al. (eds.), *Solving Riddles and Untying Knots* (FS J. C. Greenfield), Winona Lake, IN, 317–325.

Tadmor, H. & M., 1995, The Seal of Bel-Asharedu—A Case of 'Migration.' in: K. Van Lerberghe & A. Schoors (eds.), *Immigration and Emigration within the Ancient Near East* (FS E. Lipiński), Leuven, 345–355.

Van Straten, R., 1986, Panofsky and Iconclass, *Artibus et Historiae* 13, 165–181.

Watanabe, C., 1992, A Problem in the Libation Scene of Ashurbanipal, in: H. I. H. Prince Takahito Mikasa (ed.), *Cult and Ritual in the Ancient Near East*, Wiesbaden, 91–104.

——, 1998a, Symbolism of the Royal Lion Hunt in Assyria, in: J. Prosecky (ed.), *Intellectual Life of the Ancient Near East* (43e RAI), Prague, 439–450.

——, 1998b, *Aspects of Animal Symbolism in Mesopotamia* (Ph.D. diss. Cambridge University, Faculty of Oriental Studies).

Watanabe, K., 1992, Nabû-uṣalla, Statthalter Sargons II. in Tam(a)nūna, *BaM* 23, 357–369.

——, 1993a, Neuassyrische Siegellegenden, *Orient* 29, 109–129.

——, 1993b, Ein Neuassyrisches Siegel des Mīnu-aḫti-ana-ištari, *BaM* 24, 289–308.

——, 1994, Votivsiegel des Pān-Aššur-lāmur, *Acta Sumerologica* 16, 239–241.

Weissert, E., 1997, Royal Hunt and Royal Triumph in a Prism Fragment of Assurbanipal, in: S. Parpola & R. M. Whiting (eds.), *Assyria 1995. Proceedings of the 10th Anniversary Symposium of the Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project Helsinki, September 7–11, 1995*, Helsinki, 339–358.

Winter, I. J., 1981, Royal Rhetoric and the Development of Historical Narrative in Neo-Assyrian Reliefs, *Studies in Visual Communication* 7/2, 2–38.

——, 1982, Art as Evidence for Interaction: Relations between the Neo-Assyrian Empire and North Syria as seen from the Monuments, in: H. J. Nissen & J. Renger (eds.), *Mesopotamien und seine Nachbarn* (25e RAI), Berlin, 355–382.

——, 1985, After the Battle is Over: The 'Stele of the Vultures' and the Beginning of Historical Narrative in the Ancient Near East, in: H. Kessler & M. S. Simpson (eds.), *Pictorial Narrative in Antiquity to the Middle Ages* (CASVA/Johns Hopkins Symposium in the History of Art), Washington, D.C., 11–32.

——, 1987, Legitimation of Authority through Image and Legend: Seals Belonging to Officials in the Administrative Bureaucracy of the Ur III State, in: M. Gibson & R. D. Biggs (eds.), *The Organization of Power: Aspects of Bureaucracy in the Ancient Near East* (SAOC 46), Chicago, 59–89.

——, 1993, 'Seat of Kingship'/A 'Wonder to Behold': The Palace in the Ancient Near East, *Ars Orientalis* 23, 27–55.

——, 1997, Art in Empire: The Royal Image and the Visual Dimensions of Assyrian Ideology, in: S. Parpola & R. M. Whiting (eds.), *Assyria 1995. Proceedings of the 10th Anniversary Symposium of the Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project Helsinki, September 7–11, 1995*, Helsinki, 359–381.

Zerner, H., 1999, Malraux and the Power of Photography, in: G. A. Johnson (ed.), *Sculpture and Photography: Envisioning the Third Dimension*, Cambridge, 116–130.

Figure 1. Impression of stamp seal on bulla attached to bales of cloth: king vs. lion (Nimrud, Northwest Palace, Room ZT25, reign of Šalmaneser III [856–823 B.C.E.]; ND 3413; photograph courtesy The Trustees of the British Museum).

Figure 2. Impression of stamp seal on wooden box sealing, 715 B.C.E.: king vs. lion (Nineveh, reign of Sargon II [721–705 B.C.E.]; British Museum, WA Sm 2276).

Figure 3. Relief: lion hunt of Aššurnaṣirpal II [883–857 B.C.E.] (Nimrud, Northwest Palace, Room B.19a; British Museum, WA 124534).

Figure 4. Bronze band: lion hunt of Aššurnaṣirpal II, detail (Balawat; British Museum, WA 124698).

Figure 5. Relief: lion hunt of Aššurbanipal (668–627 B.C.E.) (Nineveh, North Palace, Room S¹; British Museum, WA 124875–6).

Figure 6. Multiple impressions on jar sealing (Nimrud, Ft. Shalmaneser, *rab ekalli*'s residence, reign of Esarhaddon [680–669 B.C.E.]; ND 7080; Baghdad, Iraq Museum; photograph courtesy British School of Archaeology in Iraq).
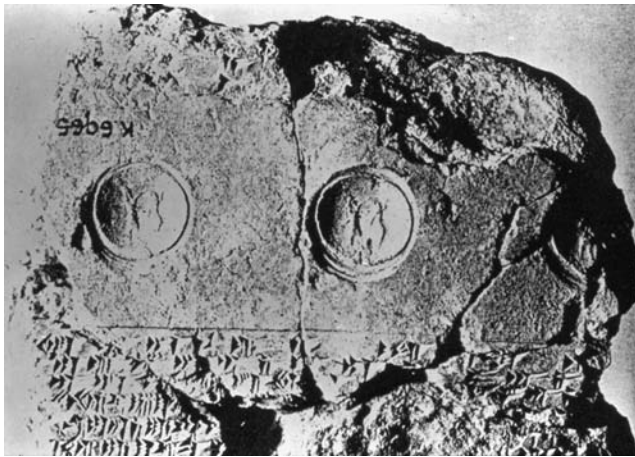
Figure 7. Impressions on tablet recording tax exemption (Niniveh, reign of Aššur-etelli-ilani [c. 625 B.C.E.]; K 3409+; photograph courtesy The British Museum).
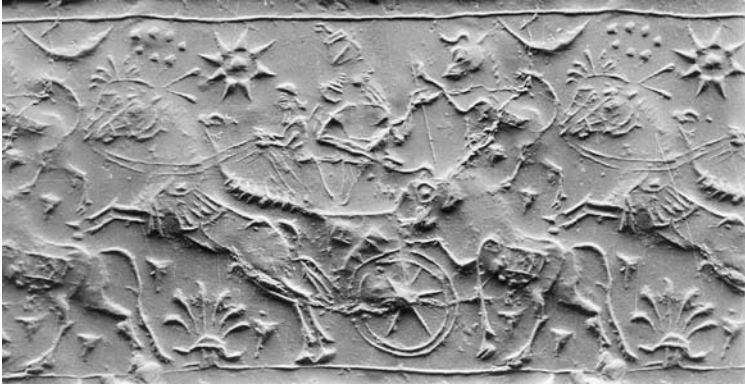
Figure 8. Modern cylinder seal impression: royal bull-hunt from chariot (Provenance unknown; 9th century B.C.E.; Royal Ontario Museum 931.4.27).

Figure 9. Relief: bull hunt of Aššurnaṣirpal II (Nimrud, Northwest Palace, Room B.20a; British Museum, WA 124532).

Figure 10. Modern cylinder seal impression: king with bow before ceremonial table and whisk-bearer (Provenance unknown; 9th–8th century B.C.E.; Pierpont Morgan Library no. 667).

Figure 11. Relief: Aššurnaṣirpal II with bow and bowl before whisk-bearer, detail (Nimrud, Northwest Palace, Room B.20b; British Museum, WA 124533).

Figure 12. Modern cylinder seal impression: figures flanking central tree and winged disk (Provenance unknown; 9th–8th century B.C.E.; Pierpont Morgan Library no. 644).

Figure 13. Relief: Aššurnaṣirpal II and winged genii flanking central tree and deity in winged disk (Nimrud, Northwest Palace, Room B.23; British Museum, WA 124531).

Figure 14. Modern impression, seal of Mušezib-Ninurta: king and griffin-genii flanking central tree and deity in winged disk (Tarbiṣu; British Museum, WA 89135).
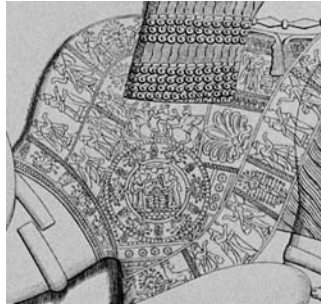
Figure 15. Drawing of relief: Aššurnaṣirpal II with bowl, showing decorated garment, detail (Nimrud, Northwest Palace, Room G.3; British Museum, WA 124565; after Layard 1849; pl. 5).

Figure 16. Relief: Aššurbanipal in lion hunt, showing decorated garment, detail (Nineveh, North Palace, Room C; British Museum, WA 124867).

Figure 17. Modern cylinder seal impression: devotional scene, worshipper between deities (Provenance unknown; likely 8th century B.C.E.; Pierpont Morgan Library no. 694).

Figure 18. Modern cylinder seal impression: devotional scene, worshipper before deity on bull, flanked by winged griffin-genii (Provenance unknown; likely 9th–8th century B.C.E.; Pierpont Morgan Library no. 702).

Figure 19. Modern impression seal of Nabû-nurka-lamur: devotional scene, worshipper before goddess Ištar in sanctuary flanked by winged male genii (Provenance unknown; likely 8th century B.C.E.; Walters Art Gallery 42.1194).
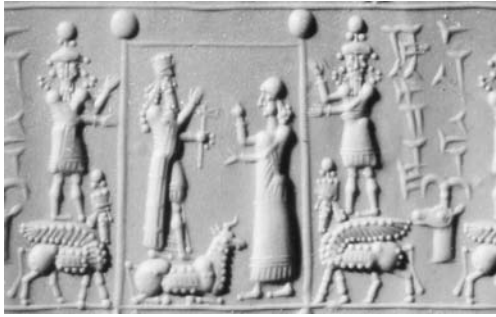
Figure 20. Modern impression, seal of Aḫua-amur: devotional scene, worshipper before god mounted on bull in sanctuary flanked by curly-haired "heroes" on winged male colossi (Provenance unknown; likely 8th century B.C.E.; British Museum, WA 132257).

Figure 21. Modern impression, seal of Aššur-belu-uṣur: devotional scene, worshipper between two deities (Provenance unknown; late 9th–early 8th century B.C.E.; Bibliothèque Nationale no. 354).

Figure 22. Modern impression, seal of Nabû-šarru-uṣur: devotional scene, worshippers before seated goddess and emblem of god Marduk (Provenance unknown; early 8th century B.C.E.; Ashmolean Museum 1922.61).
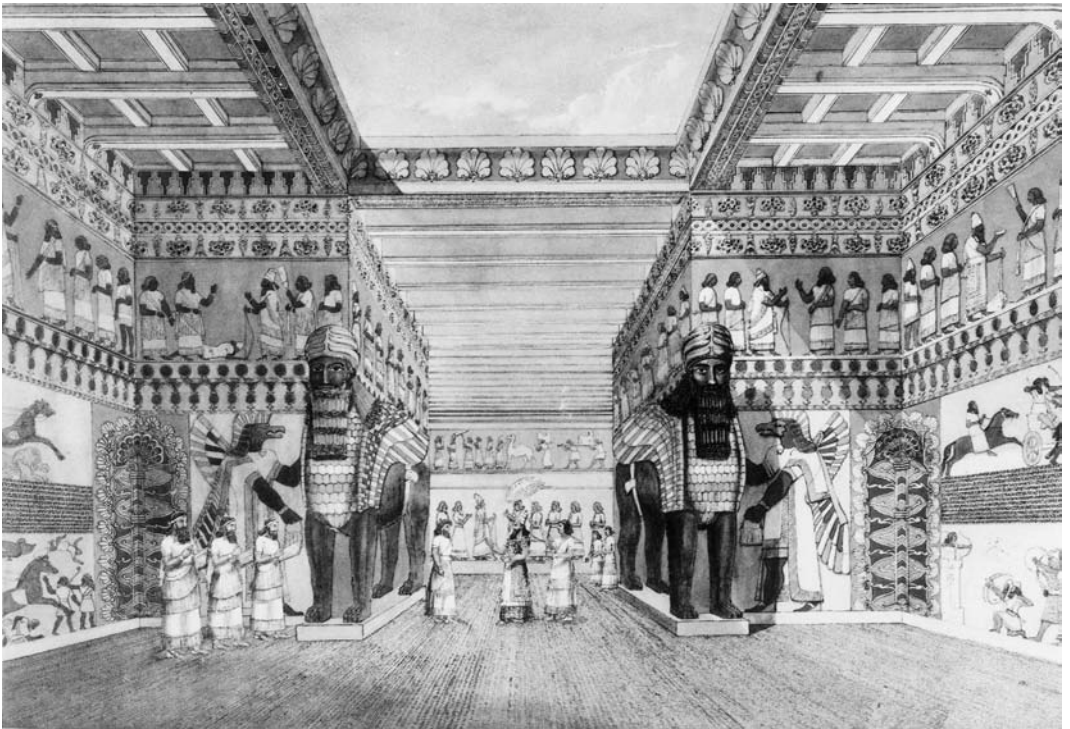
Figure 23. Watercolor reconstruction of the throneroom (Room B) of Aššurnaṣirpal II (Northwest Palace, Nimrud; after Layard 1849: pl. 2).

CHAPTER FOUR

ORNAMENT AND THE "RHETORIC OF ABUNDANCE" IN ASSYRIA

<div dir="rtl">

ארץ...לא תחסר כל בה
</div>

[Deut. 8:9]

Virtually every Mesopotamian ruler who left royal inscriptions has at some point declared himself to be the provider of "abundance" for the land—Sumerian ḫe₂.gal₂, ḫe₂.nun; Akkadian *ḫegallu, nuḫšu, ṭuḫdu*—thanks to the privileged relationship he enjoys with a god or the gods. Among the kings of the Neo-Assyrian period, such references abound. Assurnasirpal II, for example, implies the ideal when he offers a positive prognosis for a future prince: "may he establish plenty, prosperity and abundance in his land" [*nuḫšu ṭuḫdu u ḫegallu ina mātišu lukīn*]; Tiglath-pileser III refers to the god Adad, among the gods who have blessed his reign, as the one "who heaps up abundance and plenty" [*mukammir ṭuḫdi ḫegalli*]; Sargon II calls himself: "he who amasses plenty, prosperity and abundance" [*mukammir ṭuḫdi nuḫši u ḫegalli*]; Sennacherib "provides abundance and prosperity in the fields of Assyria" [*šakin nuḫši u ṭuḫdi ina ugāri ᵐᵃᵗAššur*]; Esarhaddon petitions the gods for "plenty and abundance in my land" [*ṭuḫdu ḫegallu ina mātija*]; and Assurbanipal claims: "In my reign (there was) abundance and prosperity" [*ina palēja ḫegallu ṭuḫdu*].[1]

That these references are associated specifically with abundance of water for agricultural production and/or of agricultural production

---

* This article originally appeared as "Ornament and the Rhetoric of Abundance in Assyria," *Eretz-Israel* 27 (2002) 252–264.

[1] A. K. Grayson, *Assyrian Rulers of the Early 1st Millennium BC* (RIMA 2), Toronto, 1991, ANP II 101.32, p. 297, 1. 17 from the inscription on the lion found at the Sharrat-nipḫi Temple in Nimrud; H. Tadmor, *The Inscriptions of Tiglath-Pileser III King of Assyria*, Jerusalem, 1994, pp. 94–95, line 9; pp. 112–113, line 6; *CAD* N/2: *nuḫšu*, pp. 319 and 320; R. Borger, *Die Inschriften Asarhaddons Königs von Assyrien* (AfO Beiheft 9), Osnabrück, 1967, p. 27 = Bab. A, ix 16.

itself, rather than wealth in material goods, is clear from the contexts. Assurnasirpal II calls a watercourse he constructed *Bābelat-ḫegalli* ("The Bearer of Abundance"); Shalmaneser III, Tiglath-pileser III, Sargon II and Sennacherib all speak directly of the "waters of abundance," *mē nuḫši*, which will ultimately provide good harvests; Esarhaddon's phrase quoted above is preceded by his request that the gods may "bring about successful harvests, plenty of grain"; and Assurbanipal records the abundance not only of grain, but also that of fruit trees and herds that coincided with his reign.[2] In addition, some Assyrian rulers occasionally take on the epithet *ikkaru*/LU₂.ENGAR, literally "cultivator,"[3] suggesting direct agency in this most important of investments.

Among the many roles and identities associated with the Assyrian king in textual sources,[4] some verbal epithets can be paired quite literally with images in the visual repertoire of respective rulers, such as narrative scenes representing the king fiercely triumphant in the hunt or victorious in battle;[5] however, no overtly agricultural or pastoral themes are featured among the royal reliefs that would correspond directly with the activities involved in either cultivation or animal husbandry.

The one obvious candidate for a reference to the role played by the Assyrian ruler in relation to productivity of the land is the representation in the throne room of Assurnasirpal II of the king flanking the tree that otherwise proliferates throughout his Northwest Palace at Nimrud (fig. 1). The tree is surely based upon the date palm; literally neither "Tree of Life" nor "Sacred Tree" from any known Assyrian text, although

----

[2] Grayson, RIMA 2 (above, n. 1), ANP II 101.17,1. 6; *CAD* N/2, p. 320. See also *CAD* Ḫ, *s.v. ḫegallu*: 167, as "abundant yield of fauna and flora."

[3] See, for example, two letters addressed to Esarhaddon in this way: S. Parpola, *Letters from Assyrian Scholars to Kings Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal* (AOAT 5/2), Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1983, Nos. 137 and 139. S. M. Paley, in *King of the World: Ashur-nasir-pal II of Assyria, 883–859 B.C.*, New York, 1976, uses the term "farmer," which I would resist as too literal; see instead, J.-J. Glassner, "A propos des jardins Mésopotamiens," in R. Gyselen (ed.), *Jardins d'Orient* (RES Orientales III), Paris, 1991, pp. 9–17, esp. p. 15 (cf. also *CAD* I, *ikkaru*: 49–54).

[4] Discussed most recently by P. Machinist, "Kingship and Divinity in Imperial Assyria," in G. Beekman and T. J. Lewis (eds.), *Text, Artifact and Image* (in press).

[5] It has been argued, for example, that the four types of representation of the ruler in the throne room of Assurnasirpal II at Nimrud correspond directly to the first four attributes/epithets of the king mentioned after the titulary at the beginning and end of the Ninurta Temple inscription (Grayson, RIMA 2 [above, n. 1], p. 195, ANP II 101.1, i 18b–19a, repeated p. 222, iii 126b. See I. Winter, "Art *in* Empire: The Royal Image and the Visual Dimensions of Assyrian Ideology," in S. Parpola and R. M. Whiting (eds.), *Assyria 1995*, Helsinki, 1997, pp. 359–381, for a recapitulation of these paired images and titles.

often referred to as such in the modern literature, it more likely has overtones of a generic "Tree of Abundance," which quality the tree embodies through its highly stylized composite construction.[6]

From two inlaid and otherwise identical pendants found among the jewelry in the Queens' tombs at Nimrud,[7] one bearing a replica of that composite tree, the other an image of a date palm with effulgent date clusters, it is evident that the Assyrians were perfectly capable of representing a naturalistic palm tree when desired; hence, the tree of the throne room and the first pendant *must* represent a symbolically significant composite. E. Porada long ago suggested that the spirals and curlicues extending the tree beyond its trunk represented schematized watercourses.[8] Their termination in what we call *palmettes* emanating from the central stalk would then signify new growth, mirroring the crown of the tree where new fronds appear and curve downward as volutes. Inquiry into the botanical nature of the palm confirms this notion of "new growth." For not only does the crown take the form of a palmette; palm trees in fact replicate by subsurface shoots, or runners, that then emerge around the parent tree as voluted palmettes, precisely

---

[6] On this see, most recently, B. N. Porter, "Sacred Trees, Date Palms, and the Royal Persona of Ashurnasirpal II," *JNES* 52 (1993), pp. 129–139. Also, C. Kepinski, *L'arbre stylisé en Asie occidentale au IIᵉ millénaire avant J.C.* (3 vols.), Paris, 1982. For "Tree of Life," see B. Hrouda, "Zur Herkunft des assyrisches Lebensbaumes," *BaM* 3 (1964), pp. 41–51. For "Sacred Tree," see H. Kantor, *Plant Ornament: Its Origin and Development in the Ancient Near East* (unpublished Ph.D. diss., 1945, revised and made available by the Oriental Institute, University of Chicago, 1999, ms. p. 749), who cited Sidney Smith, *Early History of Assyria*, p. 123, following his thesis that these were indeed "sacred trees," associated with the god Assur and with an actual symbol constructed and used in the New Year Festival. Kantor considered the trees to be representations of hybrid plants made up of bare tree-trunks, elaborated by copper bands, cloth and ribbon, that were set up at the portals of Assyrian temples. For "Tree of Abundance," see Porter, "Sacred Trees, Date Palms…", pp. 133–134, citing J. E. Reade, in A. Livingstone, *Court Poetry and Literary Miscellanea* (SAA III), Helsinki, 1989, frontispiece caption; also, *CAD* M/1, *s.v. mašrû*: p. 385. But there, despite occasional references to the date palm, the connotation of the word *mašrû* seems to be more that of wealth in property and goods, of which the productive date palm constituted a major source, cf. B. Landsberger, *The Date Palm and its By-Products According to the Cuneiform Sources* (AfO Beiheft 17), Graz, 1967.

[7] A. Harrak, "The Royal Tombs of Nimrud and their Jewellery," *Bulletin of the Society for Mesopotamian Studies* 20 (1990).

[8] E. Porada, *The Great King of Assyria*, New York, 1945, p. 32. Further sources for discussion of this issue are to be found in D. Castriota's notes to the English translation of Alois Riegl, *Problems of Style: Foundations for a History of Ornament*, Princeton, 1992, p. 323, note a.

as on the composite tree.[9] Such palmettes, when "farmed," could then be transplanted, eventually to develop themselves into mature trees with trunks.[10] Thus, the composite tree is one composed of the extended life-cycle of the palm, productive in dates and also in offspring; and given the pride of place of that motif in the throne room, it may well have served as the formal statement of the king's role in achieving the desired abundance for the land, concretizing thereby the ideal prosperity alluded to in the royal texts cited above.[11]

When the king gestures toward the tree as he would toward divine symbols or the gods (as seen on contemporary stelae), the ruler's image should correspond to a principal epithet, "worshipper (or keeper) of the gods," expressing the fact that he is attentive to divine needs through cultic observation. At the same time, when the ruler is then rewarded with prosperity for the realm by those very gods he has attended,[12] he is also by implication the one who literally establishes "abundance in his land." This duality of signification has both retrospective and prospective aspects: the king's standing before the already abundantly-productive tree constitutes service to the deity who *has* provided; but such service will then ideally stimulate the next round of positive response, in an unbroken chain of reciprocities. The replication of the tree throughout the Northwest Palace[13] underscores the fact that the "meaning" of the tree as emblematic of that desired abundance was also being reinforced *abundantly*!

The motif of the Assyrian composite tree is already evident in the wall paintings from Kar Tukulti-Ninurta of the Middle Assyrian period—not

---

[9] D. A. DeMason and K. N. Chandra Sekhar, "The Breeding System in the Date Palm (*Phoenix dactylifera L.*) and its Recognition by Early Cultivators," in M. J. Balick (ed.), *The Palm—Tree of Life: Biology, Utilization and Conservation* (Advances in Economic Botany 6), New York, 1988, pp. 20–35 and fig. 1. See also Landsberger, *The Date Palm* (above, n. 6), p. 22.

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 21.

[11] Or, as Julian Reade has suggested, indicating "the stability of a universe upheld by the Assyrian king…as mediator on behalf of humanity" (J. E. Reade, "The Khorsabad Glazed Bricks and their Symbolism," in A. Caubet [ed.], *Khorsabad, le palais de Sargon II, roi d'Assyrie*, Paris, 1995, p. 231). For placement, see discussion in I. J. Winter, "Royal Rhetoric and the Development of Historical Narrative in Neo-Assyrian Reliefs," *Studies in Visual Communication* 7 (1981), pp. 2–38, and virtual reality reconstruction in R. Dolce, "Dualità e Realtà Virtuale nel Palazzo Nord-Ovest di Assurnasirpal II a Nimrud," in P. Matthiae (ed.), *Studi in memoria di Henri Frankfort (1898–1954)* (Contributi e materiali di Archaeologia Orientale VII), Rome, 1997, figs. 4, 6.

[12] Parpola, *Letters from Assyrian Scholars* (above, n. 3), No. 22.

[13] See J. B. Stearns, *Reliefs from the Palace of Ashurnasirpal II* (AfO Beiheft 15), Graz, 1961; Paley, *King of the World* (above, n. 3).

only standing alone, or with animals, in paneled segments, but also flanked by winged griffin-genii, as in the Northwest Palace.[14] While Assurnasirpal II was the only ruler to exploit this theme on such a large scale, attestations of the "composite tree," often similarly flanked by genii, are known from many subsequent reigns.[15] As more and more wall space was devoted to narrative in later reigns, its presence in the palace repertoire apparently diminished;[16] however, as will be apparent below, there were also in place other, more emblematic, ways of signaling this active principle of divinely granted, royally expedited agrarian abundance—ways that had been deployed within Assyrian palaces since at least the preceding Middle Assyrian period and that continued unabated into the Neo-Assyrian period.[17]

The "palmette" motif, which may be seen as a substitute for the full-scale living palm or the composite tree, serves as an illustration of this phenomenon. Often combined with other vegetal elements, such as the bud and lotus, the pomegranate and the rosette, these plants were represented in the Assyrian palace in a variety of ways and places: from garlands in the wall paintings of Kar Tukulti-Ninurta, noted above, to radiating patterns preserved on glazed wall tiles found at Assur and Balawat (e.g., fig. 2),[18] floor coverings from Nimrud, Khorsabad

---

[14] Reproduced in W. Andrae, *Farbige Keramik aus Assur und ihre Vorstufen in altassyrischen Wandmalerei*, Berlin, 1923, p. 11 and Pls. 1–4, from the south side of the great palace terrace. The trees with flanking griffin-demons occur in a narrow register above empaneled trees on Pl. 3, much smaller in scale and incompletely preserved—hence their infrequent citation.

[15] E. Bleibtreu, *Die Flora der neuassyrischen Reliefs*, Vienna, 1980, p. 75 (Shalmaneser III), 89–90 (Tiglath-pileser III), 114–115 (Sargon II), 190 (Esarhaddon), 235 (Assurbanipal). For a Sennacherib fragment, recently discovered at Nineveh, I am indebted to John Russell, personal communication.

[16] Julian Reade has wondered whether textile wall-hangings might not have provided some of the missing iconography for the later reigns, in which representation of the tree is relatively scarce (see J. E. Reade, "The Architectural Context of Assyrian Sculpture," *BaM* 11 [1980], p. 81).

[17] Kantor (above, n. 6) suggests that *all* of the plant ornaments of the Neo-Assyrian period have direct antecedents in the Middle Assyrian period (Ch. XVIII, p. 743). Certainly, the palmette, the rosette, and chains of alternating floral elements are attested, along with the composite tree, especially evident in the palace terrace wall paintings from Kar Tukulti-Ninurta cited above, n. 14.

[18] For the Assur tiles, Andrae, *Wandmalerei* (above, n. 14), figs. 39–48 and discussion, pp. 63–76. The Balawat glazed tile fragment includes part of an inscription of Assurnasirpal II, see J. Curtis, "Nimrud and Balawat, 1989," *AfO* 38/39 (1991/92), p. 274, fig. 8. See also P. Albenda, "Decorated Assyrian Knob-Plates in the British Museum," *Iraq* 53 (1991).

and Nineveh,[19] and painted bands from Nimrud, Khorsabad and Til Barsib (fig. 3).[20]

It will be noted immediately that these representations are different from the composite tree in that elements tend to repeat in bands, chains, or empaneled arrangements, so that they fall readily into a category of the "patterned," rather than the "figural." The repetitive nature of such imagery has led most Western viewers to pass over these elements quickly, in a rush toward more dynamic narratives. Henrietta Groenewegen-Frankfort, for example, dismissed repetition as evidence of a loss of "vigor," stating that in the reduction to pattern, "temporal aspects of action and…space…(are) robbed of their dramatic character."[21]

In a review of the 1974 re-issue of Groenewegen-Frankfort's *Arrest and Movement*, I noted critically, "One senses the author's desire for a linear, post-Aristotelian notion of drama conceived as action building to a single climax, which has been sought in the ancient Near East and found wanting. However, it will be noticed that in Mesopotamian literary texts drama is rather achieved through the tension built up by repetition…Pictorial repetition, too, lifts a scene from the actual, or temporal, to the recurrent and therefore infinite and everlasting."[22] It is possible to be even more fervent today, insisting that to understand the nature of repetitive imagery in the ancient Near East in general, and in the Neo-Assyrian period in particular, it is essential to resist the Western relegation of pattern and repetition to the "merely decorative," hence epiphenomenal. Alois Riegl, in his *Stilfragen* of 1893, was the first to discuss Assyrian works in terms of his theory of what

---

[19] P. Albenda, "Assyrian Carpets in Stone," *JANES* 10 (1978), pp. 1–34.

[20] P. Albenda, "Wall Paintings from the Upper Chambers at Nimrud," *Source* 13 (1994), pp. 2–8, for drawings of fragments associated with a building of Adad-Nirari III, and in which she also refers to paintings from the Northwest Palace of Ashurnasirpal II. The Khorsabad painting from Residence K will be discussed below; for the Khorsabad glazed brick fragments, see Reade, "Khorsabad Glazed Bricks" (above, n. 11), pp. 225–251 and figs. 6 and 7, pp. 243–244. For Til Barsib, see F. Thureau-Dangin and M. Dunand, *Til Barsib*, Paris, 1936, Pls. XLV–XLVIII. Glazed bricks recently discovered from Sennacherib's Southwest Palace at Nineveh are poorly preserved, and seem to show only narrative scenes of battle and geometric designs (J. M. Russell, "Some Painted Bricks from Nineveh," *Iranica Antiqua* 34 [1999], pp. 85–109); however, since the medium is in evidence, it would not be surprising were vegetal motifs also to be found in later excavations.

[21] H. A. Groenewegen-Frankfort, *Arrest and Movement*, London, 1951, p. 162.

[22] I. J. Winter, Review of H. Groenewegen-Frankfort, *Arrest and Movement*, in *JAOS* 78 (1976), pp. 505–506.

he would call "ornament," arguing that such patterning was more indicative of cultural attitudes than had been understood by prior assumptions concerning the "decorative arts."[23] But it is actually E. R. Goodenough's 1954 emphasis upon "live symbols" charged with meaning as distinct from inert elements used for decoration that impels me here.[24]

Nowhere is this distinction clearer than in the ornamental bands that frame and extend beyond the central field of the glazed brick panel from Fort Shalmaneser, inscribed with the titles and patronyms of Shalmaneser III (fig. 4).[25] The central panel, edged by a narrow row of rosette flowers, contains a variant configuration from that of the throne room relief of Assurnasirpal II, in which the king is shown duplicated in a lower zone, facing inward toward a deity in a winged disk, while in the upper zone, a composite tree of multiple tiers is flanked by a pair of rampant bulls.[26] Because of the relationship to the relief of Assurnasirpal, attention has tended to focus on this central panel;

---

[23] See now the English translation by E. Kain, of Riegl, *Problems of Style* (above, n. 8), pp. 83–96.

[24] E. R. Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period* IV, Princeton, 1954, pp. 25–43.

[25] J. E. Reade, "A Glazed-Brick Panel from Nimrud," *Iraq* 25 (1963), pp. 37–47. The bricks were discovered fallen in the outer doorway between Room T3 and Courtyard T of Fort Shalmaneser, the room that, like Room F in the Northwest Palace of Assurnasirpal II at Nimrud, flanks the principal throne room (Tl). Reade reconstructs the panel as 4.07 m. in height and 2.91 m in width at the base (see also Astrid Nunn, *Die Wandmalerei und der glasierte Wandschmuck im alten Orient*, Leiden, 1988). Remnants of a second glazed brick panel of somewhat different design from Room T20 and bricks fallen from above in the fill of the ramp in T8 are mentioned by Reade, "Khorsabad Glazed Bricks" (above, n. 11), pp. 227 and 230, citing J. Curtis *et al.*, "British Museum Excavations at Nimrud and Balawat in 1989," *Iraq* 55 (1993), pp. 21–29.

[26] See discussion by Reade, "Khorsabad Glazed Bricks" (above, n. 11), p. 231. Note that the central tree with rampant bulls retains the palm as its core, but the offshoots alternate pomegranates with palmettes in the outer tier, and palmettes with lotus buds in the inner tier, thus underscoring it as an ideational schema. The use of the pomegranate motif corresponds well to the passage in Assurnasirpal II's Banquet Stele inscription in which the king singles out pomegranate trees in the pleasure garden he has constructed at his new capital of Nimrud, abounding in plenteous fruit and bringing joy (J. V. Kinnier-Wilson, "Lines 40–52 of the Banquet Stele of Aššunasirpal II," *Iraq* 50 [1988], pp. 79–82). The mixing of botanical elements on so many manifestations of the composite tree may offer some perspective on the suggestion of Simo Parpola, that the tree stands as a diagram of the Assyrian pantheon with a fixed number of associated gods ("The Assyrian Tree of Life: Tracing the Origins of Jewish Monotheism and Greek Philosophy," *JNES* 52 [1993], pp. 161–208). While there *may well* be times when one could argue for such an embedded and esoteric sub-text, there *must also* be other instances when the referential framework privileges other connotations, as here when more than a single product is being produced by the parent tree.

however, if we include in a "reading" of the whole composition the broad arc of concentric ornamental bands that surround the center, along with the design elements at the base, a far more significant referential universe emerges. For the scallops, or lappets, at the base are precisely the time-honored Mesopotamian convention for rendering "earth"—literally, *erṣetu*, but also "land," *mātu*, thus both the "ground" of desirable abundance in production and the "territory" of the state.[27] That such a pattern is utilized as the "ground" for the entire brick panel suggests a context for the whole that goes beyond what is depicted in the center alone.

As is evident in the reconstruction drawing, the stele-shaped central portion is framed by concentric bands of *guilloches*, rosettes, arcaded pomegranates and lotus buds, and an outer rim of alternating palmettes and goats. Given the indicators for "land" at the base, if we read the *guilloches* as references to water,[28] then it will be noted that the flowers and trees of the subsequent bands are all domesticates/cultivars; and all have symbolic associations with fertility and abundance.[29] What is more, the organization of the concentric bands replicates in a rather astonishing way the three tiers of the ideal Mesopotamian plantation, as discussed by Glassner, in which flowers grow at the foot of fruit trees cultivated in the shade of well-watered date palms.[30]

---

[27] Cf. *CAD* E, *s.v. erṣetu*, pp. 308–313, which literally means earth, land, territory, including soil, ground, dry land, and *CAD* M/l, *s.v. mātu*, pp. 414–427, which can mean country as political unit, open country, or the population of a country, but is also used descriptively (p. 419, *mātu* 2b: flat country [in contrast to mountains] and 2c: tract of land under cultivation, *erṣet mātim*). The same pattern of lappets forms the base line of the "Investiture Painting" from the Palace of Zimri-Lim at Mari, of the Old Babylonian period, which includes as surround bilaterally symmetrical trees and other floral elements (A. Parrot, *Mission archéologique de Mari*, II: *Le palais. Peintures murales*, Paris, 1958, Pls. VIII–XIV).

[28] As in the relief of Assurbanipal libating over dead lions, where the streams of water poured from his phiale descend as running spirals onto the lions (R. D. Barnett, *Sculptures from the North Palace of Assurbanipal*, London, 1976, Pl. LVII).

[29] Rosettes as flowers/low-growing plants; pomegranates as the product of fruit trees, the palmettes similarly standing for the date palm. One wonders, therefore, whether the lotus buds might not represent a second form of floral abundance—one that grows in water, requiring in fact water of a certain depth, and so perhaps a sign for abundance in the canals, as referenced in a number of royal inscriptions.

[30] Glassner, "A propos des jardins Mésopotamiens" (above, n. 3), p. 10. The only place where I would differ from Glassner is in his suggestion (p. 11) that the "royal garden" constitutes the locus of display of abundance, whereas I would see that abundance instead in subsistence production, as referenced symbolically. This issue will be developed further in a paper by Amy Gansell, forthcoming, on the Mesopotamian garden and visual art.

Viewed in the light of such a systematic progression, I would argue that the surround for the more iconic and ceremonial scenes at the center constitutes far more than mere decoration. Where in Western eyes we would see these bands as enclosing frames, setting off the represented "center" from the rest of the wall/world,[31] here I suggest that they form an intrinsic part of the iconography of the panel as a whole, and actually represent the extended universe issuing forth *from the center*: the promise of plenty and abundance in the land, called for by the Assyrian kings as per the citations given above, that will come about as a consequence of the king's proper relationship with the divine sphere.

In sum, not only do these ornamental bands constitute "live symbols"; they actually can be read sequentially as the ideal extension of the relationships expressed in the central panel. But I would insist that such a reading is *only* possible if we first shed the distorting lens that makes of the ornamental bands a frame holding things *in*, while considering repetition mere mindless fill and decoration. If, instead, we see the borders of Shalmaneser's glazed brick panel as representing movement *out* from the center, then the ruler's mediating role in providing for the state through his special relationship with the god(s) becomes both consequence and ideological tool, while the design elements themselves, through their very repetition, signify the promised multiplicity of abundance.

This reading is strengthened by consideration of one of Sennacherib's rock reliefs at Bavian, on which two deities, male and female, are carved. The goddess, at right, is represented carrying a rod, or staff, topped by a finial within which is inscribed an image of a composite tree with radiating branches terminating in pomegranates, while her wrists and throat are effusively ornamented with rosettes (fig. 5)—the very repertoire of design elements under discussion.[32] This goddess is thought to represent a synchretistic union of Mulissu, consort of Ashur, Ninlil, consort of Enlil, and Ishtar—all of whom would have been heavily implicated in the provision of abundance for the land.[33]

---

[31] J.-C. Lebensztejn, "Framing Classical Space," *Art Journal* 47 (1988), pp. 37–41.

[32] W. Bachmann, *Felsreliefs in Assyrien: Bavian, Maltai und Gundük*, Leipzig, 1927, Pl. 12.

[33] For Mulissu, see J. Black and A. Green, *Gods, Demons and Symbols of Ancient Mesopotamia*, London, 1992, pp. 140–141. It should be noted that Sennacherib and his father, Sargon II, also refer to the god Adad as one "who bestows abundance (*ḫegallu*) on the land," *CAD* Ḫ, *s.v. ḫegallu*, p. 168.

In the complete scene, she stands upon a lion, facing the great god Ashur on his animal familiar, the *mušḫuššu*, while Sennacherib is duplicated at far left and right flanking the two deities, just as the king is duplicated in Assurnasirpal's throne room reliefs of the composite tree and Shalmaneser's glazed brick panel (figs. 1 and 4). It is surely no accident that the gods of the Bavian relief grace a major watercourse dug and channeled by Sennacherib to provide water for Nineveh, and I believe we must see the goddess offering through her blessing gesture and the visual devices of the composite tree and the rosettes, the literal consequences of the "waters of abundance"—the *mê nuḫši*—to which Sennacherib himself refers in text.[34] The symbolic elements of the rock relief, then, become in the palace the ornamental bands of the promise realized: abundance in the land.

With this understanding of the Fort Shalmaneser brick panel, seen through the lens of the Bavian rock relief, other instances of palace imagery of the Neo-Assyrian period, equally characterized by repetitive bands or juxtaposed elements, take on definition as well. Amongst these works may be cited the well-known wall painting from Room 12 of Residence K at Khorsabad, dated to the reign of Sargon II (fig. 6), which sits on the long wall just opposite and visible through the main doorway into the Forecourt, and the 2 m high friezes that cover the walls of the eighth–seventh-century Assyrian Governor's Palace at Til Barsib (e.g., figs. 3 and 7).[35]

---

[34] *CAD* N/2, *s.v. nuḫšu*, p. 320.

[35] G. Loud, *Khorsabad* I, Chicago, 1938, pp. 92ff.; and G. Loud and C. B. Altman, *Khorsabad* II, Chicago, 1938, p. 14 and Pl. 88; Thureau-Dangin and Dunand, *Til-Barsib* (above, n. 20), pp. 42–74 and esp. Pls. XLVI–XLVII, Nos. xxv, xxvi, xlvi, xxi. In the former, bands frame a central stele-shaped panel not unlike the format of the glazed bricks from Fort Shalmaneser, then spread laterally out from the enclosed central panel in horizontal bands that extend the full length of the wall and expand the repertoire to include geometric, floral and emblematic elements. Although no composite tree is represented, the central motif of the king, accompanied by courtier or crown prince, before the god Ashur on a raised dais may well be a direct alternative to the duplicated ruler flanking the tree known from the earlier reigns. (NB: One could further expand examples to include the glazed wall tiles from Assur [fig. 2], and fragments of wall paintings reported from the Northwest Palace and the palace of Adad-nirari III at Nimrud; or, beyond Assyria, the elaborately ornamented column bases of the eighth century B.C.E. palaces of North Syria at Zincirli and Tell Tainat that include stylized palm, rosette and lotus motifs, which have also been suggested as explicit references to aspects of fertility associated with the palace [Giuseppe Sinopoli, *Il* bīt-hilāni *come celebrazione ideologica della regalità nel Vicino Oriente antico*, unpublished Ph.D. diss., University "La Sapienza," Rome, 2001, pp. 115–116]).

The implications for our understanding of the art of the Assyrian period are clear. When ornamental designs are dismissed as merely decorative, or even when seen individually as "symbolic" without an integrated programmatic reading,[36] the centrality of their iconographic message is obscured. Yet the association of the painted ornamental bands with major figural relief and painting in throne rooms at Til Barsib and Nimrud (as captured in the watercolor reconstruction of the upper portion of walls and ceiling, fig. 8) speaks to their non-marginal status; just as the association of glazed brick panels with exterior wall surfaces (including rosette bands edging battlements and framing gateway arches at Khorsabad that could be seen from a great distance) suggests virtual blazons of their message of divine promise afforded through the institution of "the palace"—that is, the ruler.[37]

In other words, when individual motifs such as the bud and lotus chain, the palmette, or the rosette are depicted as units, they surely function as Goodenough's "live symbols," having significance on their own.[38] At the same time, however, in a culture where repetition serves to intensify a message and to imply continuity by exemplifying principles that endure, the patterns such motifs create through repetition also signify: creating an aesthetic of visual abundance synonymous with the recurrent principles of floral and faunal abundance embodied therein.

Seen in this light, the ornamental bands and the juxtaposition of husbanded plants and animals from Assur, Nimrud, Khorsabad and Til Barsib can be linked back in time not only to the immediately preceding

---

[36] Albenda, "Assyrian Carpets" (above, n. 19), 3, 9.

[37] In addition to the throne room of Assurnasirpal at Nimrud and the main reception suite of the Governor's Palace at Til Barsib, remains of wall-painting were discovered in the throne room of Fort Shalmaneser (Room S5), attributed on stylistic grounds to Esarhaddon by Mallowan (*Nimrud and its Remains* II, London, 1966, figs. 307–308 and discussion, pp. 380–381, 433–434), that show a broad floral and geometric frieze above a figural band of courtiers. Reade ("Khorsabad Glazed Bricks" [above, n. 11], pp. 228, 231, 233–234) discusses the exterior placement of the glazed wall decoration. He notes (*ibid.*, pp. 230–231) that, in addition to the large panel of T3, glazed bricks have been found in Fort Shalmaneser associated with the ramp, T8, and with Room T20—in both cases probably having fallen from the superstructure.

[38] Albenda, for example, wonders whether the rosette/star/concentric circle may not have been associated with the goddess Ishtar—"Assyrian Carpets" (above, n. 19), p. 9. Reade associates the goats of the outer rim of the Fort Shalmaneser glazed panel with the god Ashur—"Khorsabad Glazed Bricks" (above, n. 11), p. 229. And Nunn has suggested that the color blue figuring prominently in most paintings and glazed brick may have protective power, in addition to whatever meaning the motifs may possess—*Die Wandmalerei* (above, n. 25), pp. 239–241.

Middle Assyrian period but also to considerably earlier imagery in southern Mesopotamia.[39] And so it should be. For, despite vast changes from the early city-state of Uruk to the developed territorial state of Assyria, all these historical periods inherently represent points on a single developmental scale of the Agrarian State, that phenomenon of social and political organization characterized by urbanization, stratification, and an agrarian as distinct from an industrial base to the economy,[40] in which the center is dependent for its survival upon production in the surrounding regions—cultivated, colonized, or conquered.

The actual "provisioning of cities" has been discussed by Robert Hunt from the perspective of what is necessary at the physical and practical level for the Agrarian State to be maintained.[41] His analysis complements textual evidence for rhetorical and ritual activities, which work at the symbolic and cosmological level to maintain the same system. I have argued here that similar principles may be observed in the visual sphere. In fact, it may even be possible to hypothesize that these principles were deemed *so* fundamental that they were purposely not indicated in the temporally-specific mode of narrative action, but instead were represented with the status of governing principles of the world order through their very repetition in patterned constructs.[42]

---

[39] For example, the Old Babylonian period Investiture Painting at Mari (cited above, n. 27), the façade of the Kassite Innin Temple at Warka, and even the elements found on the base of the Warka Vase of the Uruk period (A. Moortgat, *The Art of Ancient Mesopotamia*, London and New York, 1969, figs. 19 and 226–228).

[40] Note that this does *not* mean that there were no industries (textiles, pottery, metal-working) in the Agrarian State, but rather that agriculture represented both primary economic investment and primary production. With such a definition, industrialization and an industrial base to the economy is really a product of the early modern period, with many countries maintaining their identity as Agrarian States well into the twentieth century C.E., despite relatively large-scale production in non-agricultural materials, such as textiles.

[41] R. C. Hunt, "The Role of Bureaucracy in the Provisioning of Cities: A Framework for Analysis of the Ancient Near East," in M. Gibson and R. D. Biggs (eds.), *The Organization of Power: Aspects of Bureaucracy in the Ancient Near East*, Chicago, 1987, pp. 161–192.

[42] These similar themes and variant strategies are also apparent in text, as, for example, in royal hymns of the Neo-Sumerian and Old Babylonian periods, which proclaim similar goals of "abundance" at the rhetorical level, while lamentations mourn what has been lost. The text known as the "Lamentation over Ur," for example, closes with the promise of full rivers, good rains, abundant grain, fish and fowl in the marshes, plentiful reeds and fruit-bearing trees in the orchards (P. Michalowski, *The Lamentation over the Destruction of Sumer and Ur* [Mesopotamian Civilizations 1], Winona Lake, 1989, ll. 498–505)—in short, all that a good Agrarian State needs to be fully functional.

Thus, we are forced to rethink the way(s) in which themes introduced as repetitive ornament are intentionally placed to actively interact with (and are no less meaningful than) the historical narratives that we have come to associate with the Neo-Assyrian period. Such a view requires that we be conscious of and actively resist the automatic transfer of modernist values to the reading of Mesopotamian works. Indeed, the world view reflected is markedly close to that of the European medieval world, in which "ornament" is equally raised to an autonomous mode of representation, capable of producing particular effects and inducing particular mental constructs.[43] Whether one looks to the concentric ornamental bands outlining Romanesque church doorways or the elaborately patterned pages of the Book of Kells, such works are, as in the case of Mesopotamia, not merely decorative. Instead, they are held to be consistent with and illustrative of the concepts underlying the etymology of the word *ornatus* in medieval theology, which is, after all, but the Latin rendering of the Greek *cosmos*, the organized world infused with harmonious order.[44]

Within the Christian hermeneutic, this order is established by the divine creator, hence, *ad decorum* (the richer and non-pejorative etymology of "decoration"); and underlying it is surely the promise of Deuteronomy 8:7–9: a "land of watercourses…, wheat and barley, vines and fig trees and pomegranates…," in which nothing shall be lacking. In an Assyrian hermeneutic as well, whether located visually in the motif of the composite, reproductive tree, or in the variety of repeated ornamental elements, the principles referenced constitute nothing less than the divine underpinnings of "life" and "order," mediated by the ruler and extended to the populace as a celebration of agrarian abundance.

---

[43] S. Moralejo, "D. Lucas de Tuy y la 'actitud estetica' en arte medieval," *Euphrosyne* 22 (1994), pp. 341–346; and especially, J.-C. Bonne, "De l'ornemental dans l'art médiéval (VII–XII siècle). Le modèle insulaire," in J. Baschet and J.-C. Schmitt (eds.), *L'Image. Fonctions et usages des images dans l'Occident médiéval* (Cahiers du Léopard d'Or 5), Paris, 1996, pp. 207–249. For related concepts in the Roman period, see D. Castriota, *The Ara Pacis Augustae and the Imagery of Abundance in Later Greek and Early Roman Imperial Art*, Princeton, 1995.

[44] Bonne, "De l'ornemental…" (above, n. 43), p. 238, citing Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae* III, 17, P. L. 82, Col. 164.
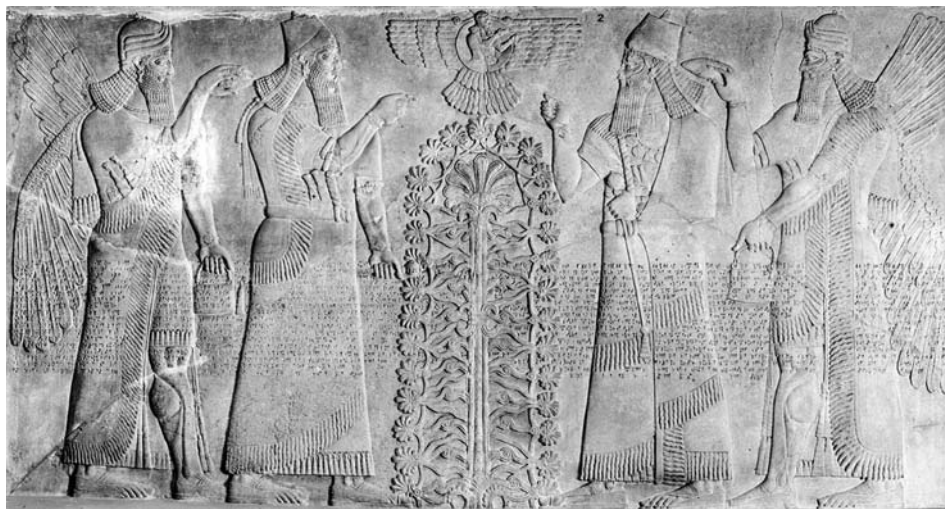
Acknowledgments

Figure 1. King and genii flanking composite tree, Room B.23, Northwest Palace of Assurnasirpal II, Nimrud (courtesy of the Trustees, The British Museum; WAA 124531).
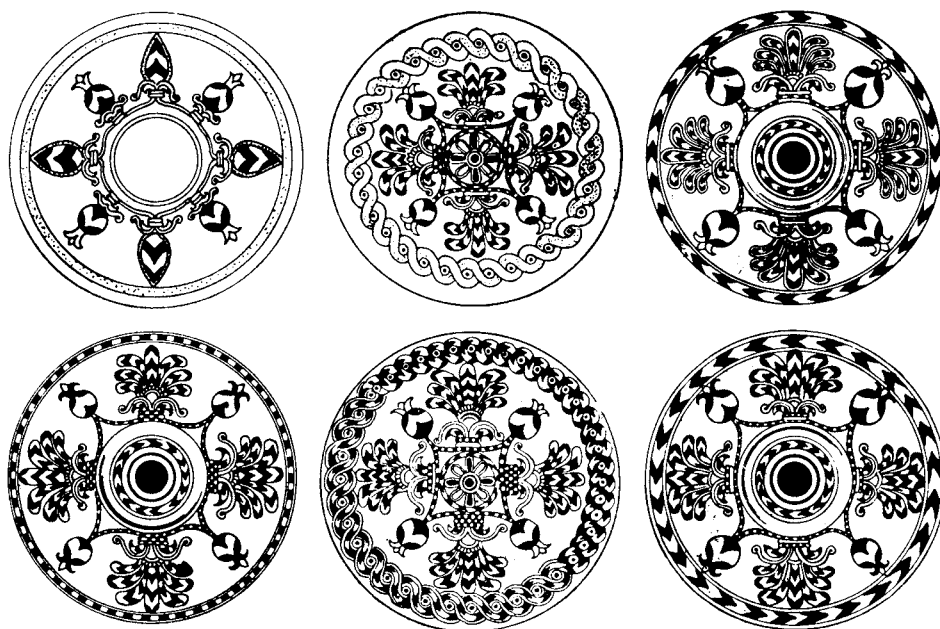

Figure 2. Glazed wall tiles, Assur (after Andrae, *Wandmalerei* [see n. 14], figs. 39, 41, 45, 47).
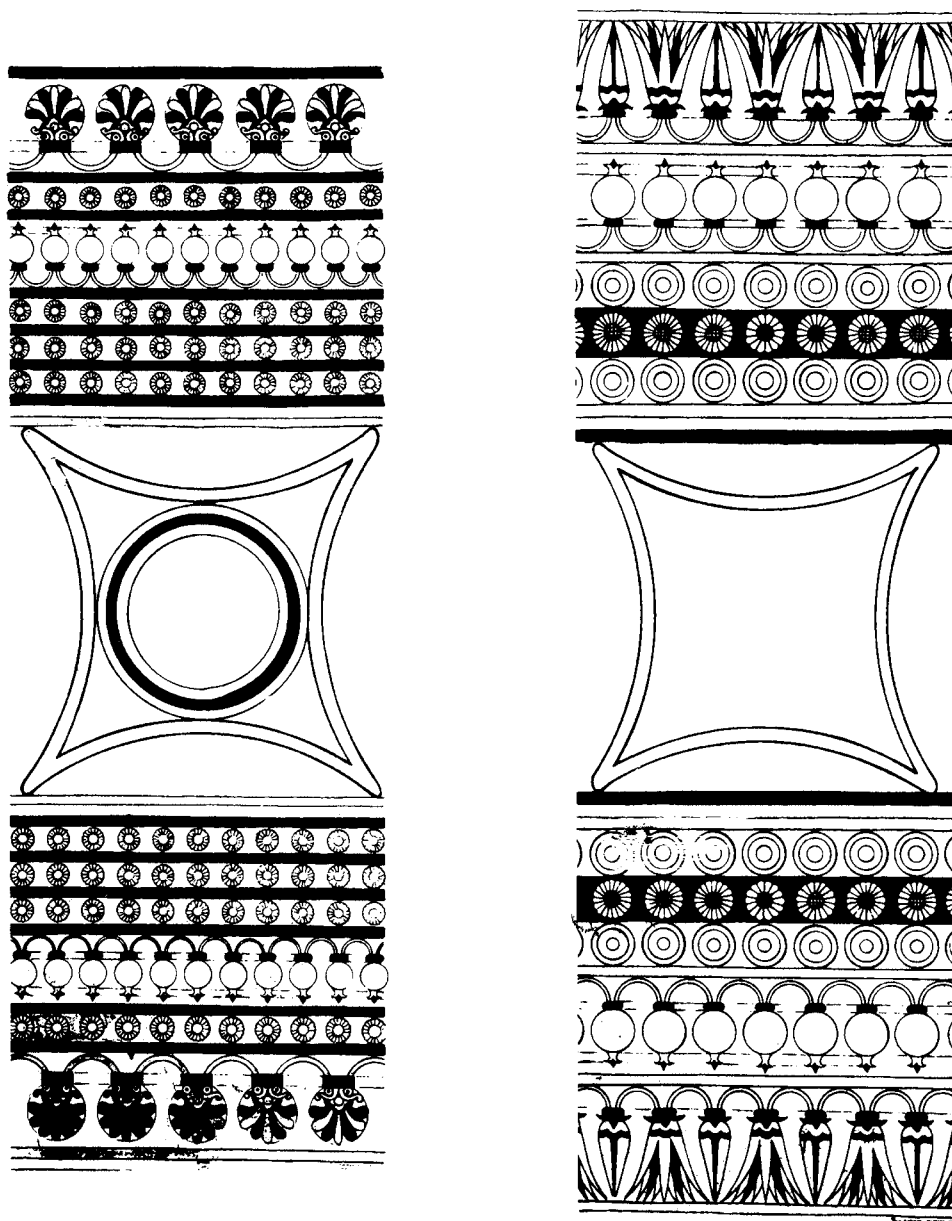
Figure 3. Detail drawings of wall paintings, Rooms XXIV and XXII,
Governor's Palace, Til Barsib (after Thureau-Dangin and Dunand, *Til Barsib*
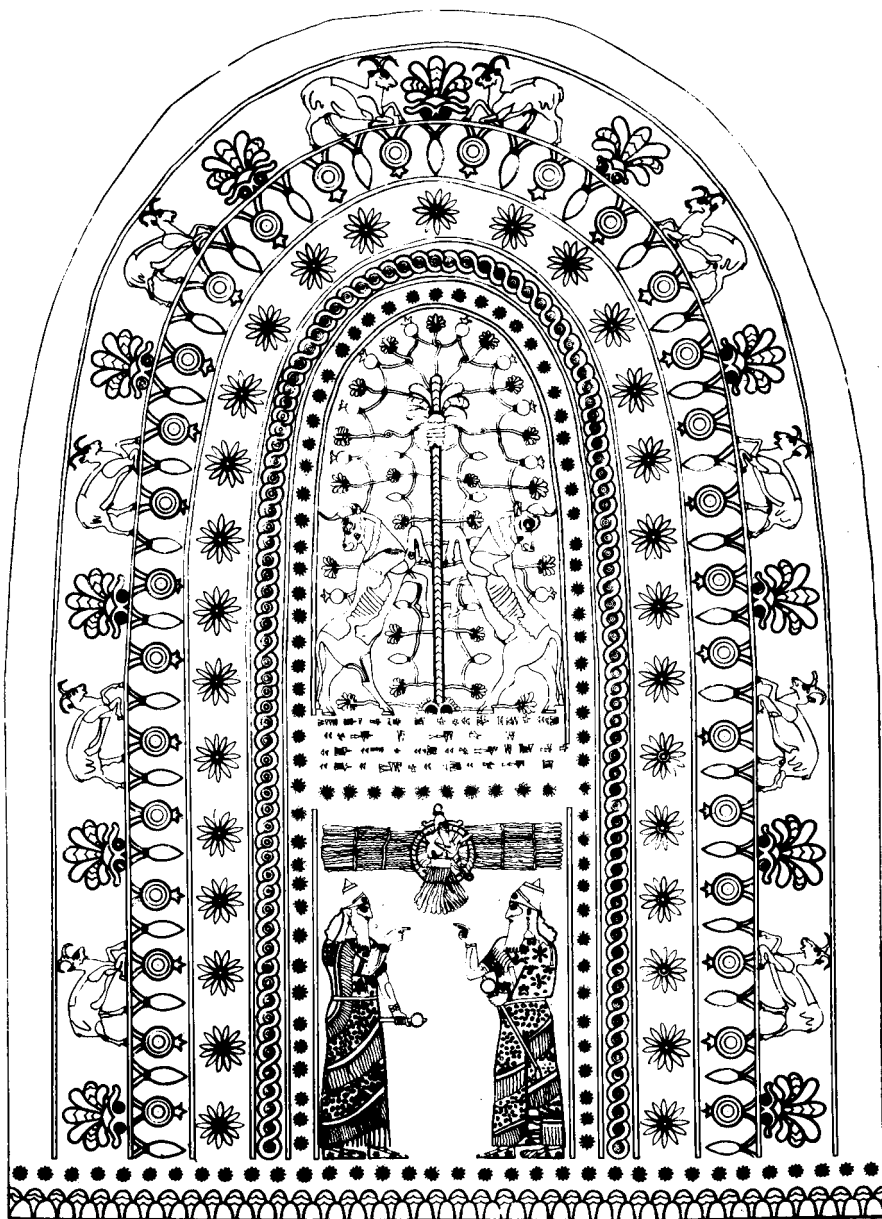[see n. 20], Pl. XLV).

Figure 4. Drawing of glazed brick panel of Shalmaneser III, from Room T3 doorway, Fort Shalmaneser (after Reade, *Iraq* 25 [see n. 25], Pl. IX).
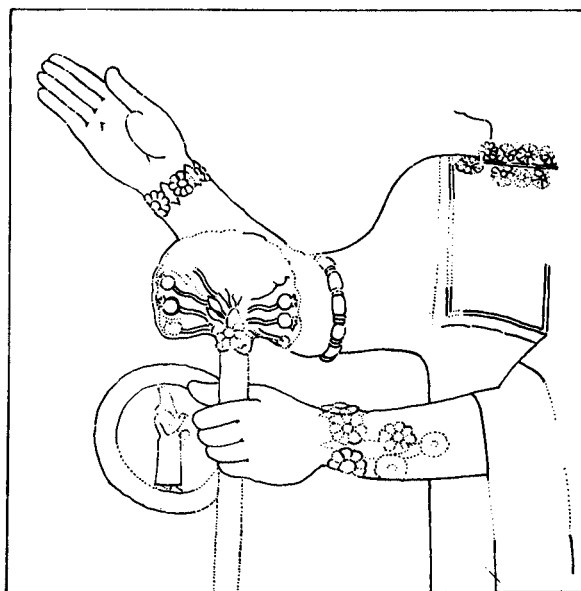
Figure 5. Drawing of Goddess Mulissu/Ninlil/Ishtar from Sennacherib's rock relief at Bavian (after Bachmann, *Felsreliefs* [see n. 32], Pl. 12b).

Figure 6. Drawing of wall painting, Room 12, Residence K, Khorsabad (after Loud and Altman, *Khorsabad* II [see n. 35], Pl. 88).
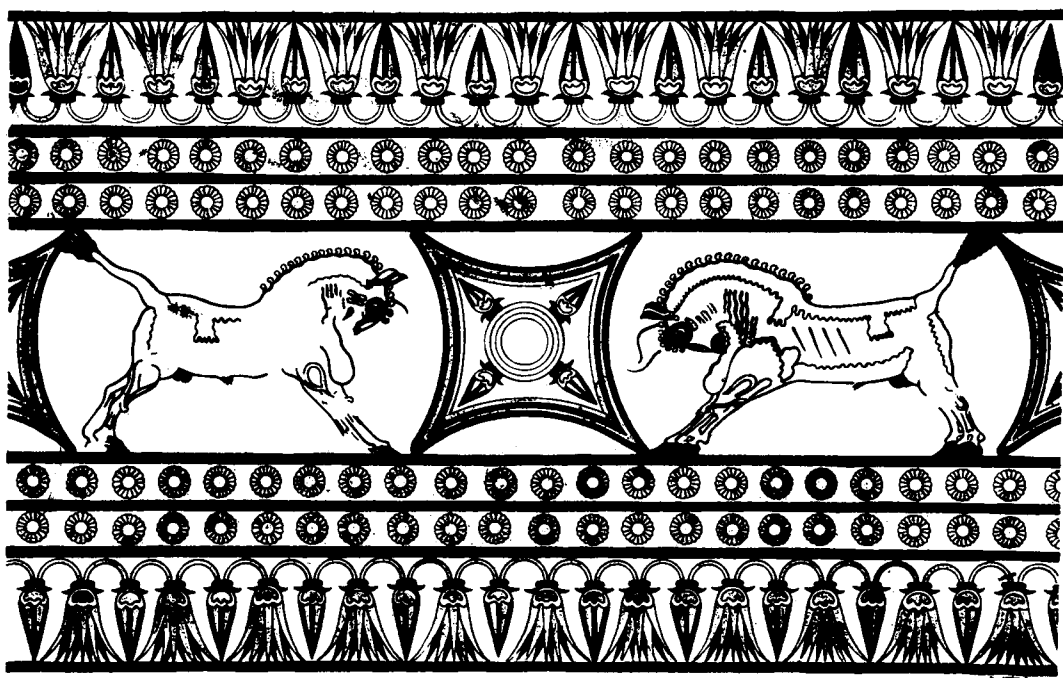
Figure 7. Detail drawing of wall painting, Room XXI, Governor's Palace, Til Barsib (after Thureau-Dangin and Dunand, *Til Barsib* [see n. 20], Pl. XLVII).
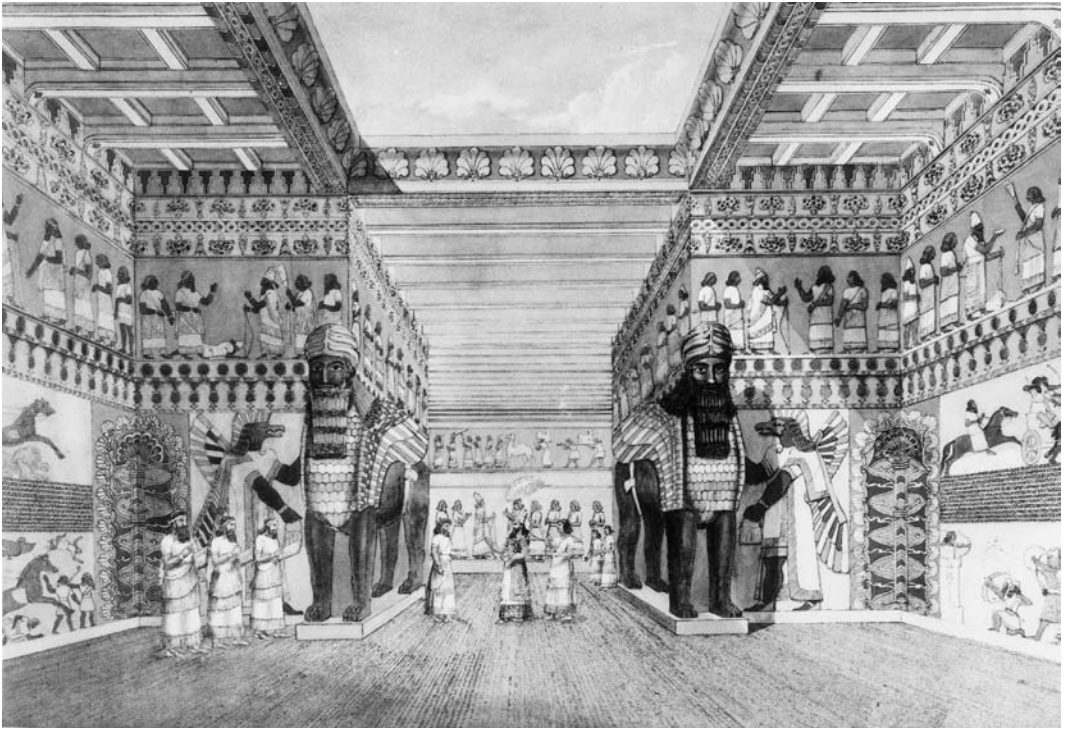
Figure 8. Reconstruction of the throne room (Room B) of the Northwest Palace, Nimrud (after A. R. Layard, *Monuments of Nineveh* I, London, 1853, Pl. 2).

BRONZE AND IVORY/LUXURY GOODS

CHAPTER FIVE

PHOENICIAN AND NORTH SYRIAN IVORY CARVING
IN HISTORICAL CONTEXT:
QUESTIONS OF STYLE AND DISTRIBUTION

Part I: Style

Ivory as a material has a unique and fascinating appeal by virtue of its rich warm colour and sheen. Since very early times, ivory has been synonymous with luxury, as witnessed in the Old Testament reference to Ahab's "house of ivory", the epitome of luxurious living; in Amos' imprecation against the rich "that lie upon beds of ivory"; and in Ezekiel's lament for Tyre, perfect in beauty, where the very benches are made of ivory.[1] In addition, we are told that Solomon's royal throne was made of ivory, commissioned from Phoenician craftsmen who excelled in this art.[2] Finally, the identification of ivory with luxury and hence corruption is clear in the Homeric allusion to the "Gate of Ivory", through which dreams pass that mislead.[3]

The discovery of actual ivory objects more-or-less contemporary with the literary references during excavations of the Assyrian palaces at Nimrud in the mid-nineteenth century thus engendered great excitement.[4] The pieces were not only beautiful in themselves; they also brought the ancient traditions to life.

The esteem in which the ivories were held in their own time is clearly reflected in the many references by Assyrian kings to objects and tusks taken in booty or received as tribute, as well as in the care with which such transactions were represented on royal reliefs.[5] Since the early

---

* This article originally appeared as "Phoenician and North Syrian Ivory Carving in Historical Context: Questions of Style and Distribution," *Iraq* 38 (Spring 1976) 1–22.

[1] I *Kings* 22:39; *Amos* 6:4; and *Ezekiel* 27:6.

[2] I *Kings* 10:8.

[3] *Odyssey* 19:565.

[4] A. H. Layard, *The Monuments of Nineveh* (2 vols.; London, 1849–53), Pls. 88–91.

[5] Cf. accounts in D. D. Luckenbill, *Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia* (Chicago, 1926, 1927; henceforth: *ARAB*), Vol. I, §§ 459, 475, 476, 479 (Aššurnaṣirpal II); §§ 585, 593, 625 (Shalmaneser III), etc.

excavations at Nimrud, a number of other sites in the Near East, such as Hasanlu, Khorsabad, Tell Halaf, Arslan Tash, Zincirli, Tell Tainat, Hama, and particularly Samaria, seat of Ahab and capital of ancient Israel, have been found to contain ivories, although in more modest quantities;[6] while subsequent excavations at Nimrud from 1949 to 1963 have produced additional collections of fine ivory work from virtually every important building investigated.[7] Ivory carving then constitutes one of the major categories of remains that we have preserved from this important period of the early first millennium B.C.

 The original collection of Nimrud ivories was published by R. D. Barnett.[8] In his study, Barnett included a history of the early writings on this subject—describing how the opinions of nineteenth-century scholars were initially divided as to whether the ivories must represent Phoenician or Egyptian work, because of the many Egyptian motifs contained on them; and how, the consensus finally agreeing upon their Phoenician origin, it was not until 1912 that Friedrich Poulsen recognized within the group a sub-division of works derived from North

---

[6] Hasanlu: A few fragments published by O. W. Muscarella, "Hasanlu 1964," *BMMA* 25 (1966), 121–36; the entire corpus is currently being prepared for publication by the same author. I am grateful to him and to Robert H. Dyson, Jr., Director of the Hasanlu Project, for permitting me access to the unpublished material.

Khorsabad: G. Loud and C. B. Altman, *Khorsabad II, The Citadel and the Town* (Oriental Institute Publications XXXVIII; Chicago, 1938), Pls. 51–6.

Tell Halaf: B. Hrouda, *Tell Halaf IV: Die Kleinfunde aus historischer Zeit* (Berlin, 1962), Pls. 9:46–58; 10:59, 63, 64; 11:71; 12:78, 80, 81.

Arslan Tash: F. Thureau-Dangin *et al.*, *Arslan Task* (Paris, 1931), Pls. XIX–XLVI.

Zincirli: F. von Luschan, *Ausgrabungen in Sendschirli V* (Berlin, 1943; henceforth *AiS*), Pls. 60: as–bb; 63; 64a, c; 65; 66; and drawings, 67.

Tell Tainat: unpublished fragments in the collection of the Oriental Institute Museum, University of Chicago. I am grateful to Alfred Hoerth, who is scheduled to publish the material, for permission to make reference to them here.

Hama: H. Ingholt, *Rapport préliminaire sur sept campagnes de fouilles à Hama, 1932–1938* (Copenhagen, 1940), Pl. XXXIV.

Samaria: J. W. and G. M. Crowfoot, *Samaria-Sebaste II: Early Ivories from Samaria* (London, 1938).

[7] Major pieces were published in the general work, M. E. L. Mallowan, *Nimrud and its Remains* (2 vols., New York, 1966; henceforth, *N&R*), passim. In addition, the following complete catalogues have appeared in the schedule of full publication of the ivories: J. J. Orchard, *Equestrian Bridle Harness Ornaments* (Ivories from Nimrud 1949–1963, Fasc. I, Part 2; Aberdeen, 1967); M. E. L. Mallowan and L. G. Davies, *Ivories in Assyrian Style* (Ivories from Nimrud 1949–1963, Fasc. II; Aberdeen, 1970); M. E. L. Mallowan and G. Herrmann, *Furniture from SW7, Fort Shalmaneser* (Ivories from Nimrud 1949–1963, Fasc. III; Aberdeen, 1974; henceforth, *SW7*).

[8] R. D. Barnett, *Catalogue of the Nimrud Ivories in the British Museum* (London, 1957; henceforth, *CNI*).

Syria. Poulsen distinguished the North Syrian from the Phoenician style by a general lack of Egyptian elements and on the basis of certain details and motifs (hairdo, trees and floral elements, female sphinxes, musicians in procession toward a seated figure) related to North Syrian reliefs from Carchemish, Zincirli, Maraş and Tell Halaf.[9]

The distinction first made by Poulsen was developed further by Barnett in his early articles and in the final publication of the ivories in the British Museum cited above.[10] The "North Syrian" group was a coherent collection that had been excavated by Loftus in 1854 in a palace at the southeast corner of the acropolis of Nimrud, referred to (following Mallowan) as the Burnt Palace; the "Phoenician" group, by contrast, had been discovered by Layard in 1848–9 in a building at the opposite side of the mound, called the Northwest Palace.

Following Poulsen, Barnett based his stylistic division of the Syrian group on a lack of the "Egyptian" features which he felt characterized the Phoenician works (fig. 1), pointing instead to Hurrian and Hittite elements left over as a heritage from the second millennium.[11] He referred specifically to scenes of animal combat, chariot hunts (fig. 2), and processions towards a seated figure, as well as certain mythological motifs, like the "Slaying of Humbaba", known to have originated in Syria. In addition, Barnett described the specific physiognomy that characterizes the style: oval face, high receding forehead, large eyes and nose, little or no chin, and small pinched mouth; and here he also drew attention to the similar physiognomy represented on the statue of Idrimi of Alalakh of the second millennium B.C. These features find very close parallels on monuments of the first millennium in North Syria as well—for example, on the reliefs from Tell Halaf and Carchemish, on both reliefs and metal objects from Zincirli, and on an unpublished stone head from Tell Tainat.[12] That this represented an actual physical type is documented by photographs taken by John Garstang in the region of

---

[9] F. Poulsen, *Der Orient und die frühgriechische Kunst* (Leipzig, 1912), 38–53.
[10] R. D. Barnett, "The Nimrud Ivories and the Art of the Phoenicians," *Iraq* 2 (1935), 185–99; "Phoenician and Syrian Ivory Carving," *PEQ*, 1939, 4–19.
[11] Barnett, *CNI*, 62.
[12] Cf. for example, W. Orthmann, *Untersuchungen zur späthetitischen Kunst* (Bonn, 1971; henceforth, *USK*), Pls. 15, 28 and 57; and von Luschan, *AiS V*, Pls. 46k and 47d. The Tell Tainat head = Oriental Institute Field Registration Number T.2660; I am grateful to W. Orthmann, who will publish the stone sculpture from the 'Amuq excavations, for permission to refer to the piece here.

Aintab during the 1930's.[13] What is more important, however, is that in the first millennium B.C. these features constituted a recognizable regional convention for rendering human faces.

Other parallels were drawn with materials from North Syrian and southeast Anatolian sites to substantiate the origin of the Loftus group of ivories, although this was not possible for the Layard group, as none of the major Phoenician sites of the early first millennium has been excavated. However, the proximity of the Phoenician coast to Egypt and the long-established historical relations between the two regions made evident the presence of a heavy complement of Egyptian elements in the Phoenician works. Although Barnett did not directly compare the two groups, the Phoenician works are characterized as "accurately and gracefully drawn",[14] while for the Syrian pieces, "the desire to please sensuously seems to have been carefully obliterated".[15]

Finally, Barnett noted that the Syrian group was more restricted in variety of technique than the Phoenician, stating that, "for example, 'cloisonnée' or inlay work in ivory was probably developed by the Phoenicians, was commonly used by them and only sparingly employed in the Syrian group".[16] In all, fragments of no more than approximately six pyxides from the Burnt Palace and a few pieces from Mallowan's excavations in Fort Shalmaneser have been preserved, carved in a purely North Syrian style, yet using the inlay technique for surface decoration.[17] In addition to inlaid work being more rare in the North Syrian group, it is possible to observe clear differences in the technique of applying the inlay. The Phoenician-style pieces have deeper sockets for the material to be inlaid. On the Syrian pieces, each socket, although shallow, has further small holes drilled into the back of the trough, presumably to facilitate the bite of the adhesive. These additional holes do not appear on inlaid ivories of Phoenician style (cf. figs. 15 and 16 with figs. 13 and 20).

At the time Barnett published his study, he felt that the two groups from Nimrud could also be distinguished by usage, as the Phoenician group was comprised mainly of parts of furniture, while the Syrian group was made up of small cosmetic items, like pyxides, handbowls,

---

[13] J. Garstang, *Land of the Hittites* (London, 1910), Pl. LXXXIV, 320.
[14] Barnett, *CNI*, 62.
[15] Ibid., 43.
[16] Ibid., 155–61.
[17] Cf. ibid., S. 13–18 and S. 23; and Mallowan, *N&R* II, figs. 499 and 525.

and figures in the round which were very possibly handles or staves from more complex objects.[18] The more recent excavations at Nimrud have demonstrated, however, that this must be amended, as furniture in characteristically North Syrian style has been recovered in Fort Shalmaneser, to the east of the citadel mound (e.g., fig. 3).

Thus, while Barnett's work remains the basis for distinction between the Phoenician and North Syrian schools of ivory carving in the early first millennium B.C., the publications by Mallowan and his colleagues of the new finds from Nimrud have added sufficiently to the repertoire of known forms and motifs to occasion a renewed examination of the material. In particular, with the discovery of furniture plaques in North Syrian style from Nimrud,[19] it is now possible to compare directly objects of similar usage, and in so doing, to note differences in specific details that may be useful in reinforcing, if not expanding the bases upon which Phoenician art may be distinguished from North Syrian.

One important detail that can be used to distinguish Syrian from Phoenician work is the winged sun-disc. In the Syrian group, the winged disc occurs with frequency on plaques, generally in the field above individual figures, and across the entire top of one furniture panel from Fort Shalmaneser (cf. figs. 4 and 3).[20] The particular winged disc associated with the Syrian style has pendant volutes suspended on either side of the disc, with a fan of tail-feathers between. The curls either spring directly from the attached portion of the wings or form separate elements. Phoenician sun-discs, by contrast, do not include these pendant volutes, while the disc is generally flanked by uraeus serpents, a feature notably lacking on Syrian examples (fig. 5).[21]

The motif of the winged disc came to Western Asia from Egypt, where it had been considered a symbol of royalty, in the second millennium B.C., and became an important iconographic element in Syria with the development of the Mitannian glyptic style.[22] The Egyptian disc is usually flanked by uraeus serpents, which then constitutes the source for this detail on Phoenician-style ivories of the first

---

[18] Barnett, *CNI*, 63–110, compared with 111–122.
[19] Cf., e.g. Mallowan and Herrmann, *SW7*.
[20] Ibid., nos. 1, 2, 8, 9, 19, 21, 22, 46, 57, 63, 64.
[21] Mallowan, *N&R* II, fig. 481; Orchard, *Equestrian Bridle Harness Ornaments*, nos. 137, 147; Barnett, *CNI*, S. 146.
[22] Cf. on this, H. Frankfort, *Cylinder Seals* (London, 1939), 208–9.

millennium.[23] The sun-discs with pendant curls found on Syrian monuments, however, are more likely to be descendants of the Hittite winged disc, seen, for example, as the royal symbol of Tudhaliya IV (1250–1220 B.C.) on his rock reliefs at Yazılıkaya and on contemporary sealings.[24] The motif had probably been borrowed from Egypt during the period of the Hittite Empire as an expedient iconographic translation of the title for the Hittite king, addressed as "my Sun".[25] The form of the pendant volute curls is not unlike the curls associated with the hairdo of the goddess Hathor in Egypt. This may well have been a conscious reference, as Hathor herself is associated with the sun and often is shown with a sun-disc between her cow-horns, while the Hittite solar deity was also female: the sun-goddess of Arinna. However, the "curls" could also have evolved from the volutes that generally formed the outermost tail-feathers. In any event, while the winged disc alone had been at home in Syria since the flowering of Mitannian glyptic, the embellishment of the volutes at the tail passed via the Hittites into the first-millennium art of North Syria, while the Phoenician version is more directly indebted to Egypt.[26]

Unfortunately, we do not have many examples of Phoenician art in other media from which to establish the characteristic form of the Phoenician disc, although it does appear on a carved stone altar from Sidon (seventh–sixth century B.C.), on a piece of hammered gold foil found in Malta (seventh century B.C.) and in damaged, incomplete condition on a seal from Curium, Cyprus (probably seventh century).[27] With the Syrian material we are more fortunate in having a large corpus of stone monuments with which to compare the ivories, and in the first

---

[23] An example of the Egyptian winged disc was in fact found at Nimrud, carved on an ivory scarab inscribed with the name of 26th Dynasty pharaoh, Taharka, a contemporary of Esarhaddon of Assyria (cf. Mallowan, *N&R* II, fig. 583 (photo reversed)).

[24] E. Akurgal, *Art of the Hittites* (New York, 1962), Pl. XXIX and fig. 78; H. Bossert, *Altanatolien* (Berlin, 1942), nos. 705–7.

[25] Cf. J. B. Pritchard, ed., *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament* (2nd edition; Princeton, New Jersey, 1955) 203.

[26] The winged disc as it appears in Assyrian glyptic has its own basic characteristics, and thus constitutes a third group, quite distinct from both the Phoenician and the Syrian discs described here (cf. E. Porada, *Corpus of Near Eastern Seals in North American Collections I: The Collection of the Pierpoint Morgan Library* (Washington, D.C., 1948), 640, 648, etc.

[27] O. Hamdy Bey and T. Reinach, *Une necropole royale á Sidon* (Paris, 1892), fig. 19; D. B. Harden, *The Phoenicians* (London, 1962), Pl. 91; H. J. Kantor, "The Ivories," in D. McEwan *et al.*, *Soundings at Tell Fakhariyeh* (Oriental Institute Publications LXXIX; Chicago, 1956), Pl. 66B.

millennium B.C., numerous examples of this particular winged disc with volutes may be noted.

First among these is a stele from Carchemish, which shows a winged disc below the sun and moon-sickle, the sun-disc actually still containing the four-pointed star related to the Hittite "signe royale".[28] A second fragment from Carchemish—part of a basalt relief from the Great Staircase—shows a portion of a winged disc with volutes on which the shape of the shoulder area corresponds exactly to the corresponding part of the wing on the Nimrud pieces (cf. fig. 6).[29] Both reliefs from Carchemish are probably to be dated to the ninth century B.C., as are similar monuments with the same disc in the upper field from the neighbouring sites of Til Barsib and Bireçik.[30] That the same form persists into the eighth century B.C. is evident on the stele of the seated lady from Zincirli, contemporary with the reign of Bar-Rakib, vassal of Tiglath-pileser III (744–727 B.C.) of Assyria.[31] The disc also appears above the chariot on the "Hunt Relief" from Sakçe Gözü, of approximately the same date.[32] This last example is identical in design and in component parts to many of those from Fort Shalmaneser, with the curving inside area of the wing coming to a sharp point at the top, fanning tail-feathers, two registers of wing-feathers, and tightly-rolled pendant volutes.[33] It is evident therefore that this type of disc is characteristic of the North Syrian "koine", and helps to establish the North Syrian style as distinct from the Phoenician.

Another detail which distinguishes the two groups is the form of certain flowers used as fill-ornaments and associated with "sacred trees". It will be noted that on almost every one of the figured plaques associated with furniture panels in North Syrian style found in room SW7 of Fort Shalmaneser, there is a plant element consisting of a long wavy stem, from the shoots of which issue various types of flowers. The figures on the plaques are generally engaged in grasping one or two of the plants' tendrils, or reaching towards the flowers. One particular type of flower that sometimes issues from these plants may be seen on

---

[28] C. L. Woolley and T. E. Lawrence, *Carchemish* II (London, 1921), Pl. A. 16:1.

[29] C. L. Woolley and R. D. Barnett, *Carchemish* III (London, 1952), Pl. B.36c.

[30] Til Barsib: Orthmann, *USK*, Pl. 53a; Bireçik: ibid., Pl. 5c. Cf. also, discussion in D. Ussishkin, "On the dating of some groups of reliefs from Carchemish and Til Barsib," *An. St.* 17 (1967), 181–192; as well as in Orthmann, *USK*, 133–48.

[31] Orthmann, *USK*, Pl. 66d.

[32] Ibid., Pl. 51c.

[33] Mallowan and Herrmann, *SW7*, nos. 1, 4, 22, 38, 50, etc.

fig. 4. It consists of a fan-shaped cluster of leaves that resembles the palmette plants of Phoenician ivories (e.g., fig. 1). However, the Syrian examples are distinct in that they do not include the symmetric volutes at the stem-juncture, which are always present on Phoenician examples. This simplified Syrian palmette has an antecedent in one of the trees of the Mari "Investiture" fresco,[34] and is found also on an orthostat relief of a bull-man from Carchemish (fig. 7).[35] On this basis, I would suggest that the fan-shaped plant without volutes serve as a criterion of the North Syrian style. Moreover, the particularly sinuous quality of the plant stems, as seen both on ivories and on the Carchemish relief, seems also to be characteristic of the Syrian as opposed to the Phoenician group.

While one could continue to cite specific differences in detail between the two styles, there are also overriding differences in composition and the use of space that clearly distinguish Phoenician from North Syrian works.

For example, in a large majority of Phoenician representations, symmetry is introduced in the individual plaque itself, with two figures on either side of a central element. This is particularly true of men or animals shown flanking a tree (cf. fig. 1).[36] The trees, too, are symmetrical. In the series of comparable panels found in Fort Shalmaneser, however, individual plaques contain only a single figure, and a very assymetrical plant issues from the side of the plaque (fig. 4).[37] Symmetry is therefore only achieved by the juxtaposition of corresponding plaques in the overall panel—e.g., two plaques with figures facing to the left opposed to two with figures facing to the right (cf. fig. 3). There are even cases in which all of the figures face in the same direction, denying symmetry altogether. This lack of concern for perfect balance, whether in the composition of individual plaques or in the larger context of the panels, is quite distinct from the typical Phoenician disposition of space.

The sense of balance in Phoenician carvings manifests itself even in works that are not strictly symmetrical. To illustrate this point, one may juxtapose a "Phoenician-style" *à-jour* plaque of a winged female

---

[34] A. Parrot, *Sumer* (New York, 1959), fig. 346.

[35] Woolley and Barnett, *Carchemish* III, Pl. B.49a (= Orthmann, *USK*, Pl. 35d).

[36] Mallowan, *N&R* II, fig. 481 (= our fig. 1), as well as figs. 428, 467, 482, 526, 627, to cite but a few.

[37] Mallowan and Herrmann, *SW7*, nos. 2, 3, 21, 22, 46 and 66, as compared with nos. 1 and 65.

sphinx from room S30 at Fort Shalmaneser with a "Syrian" example of the same motif from room SW37 (cf. figs. 8 and 9).[38] One feels justified in calling the latter North Syrian on the basis of its similarity to the sphinx orthostat from Hilani II at Zincirli and the double-sphinx column bases from both Zincirli and Sakçe Gözü, where ivory and stone share the same characteristics of very wide breasts, jutting wing, and broad, round face (fig. 10).[39] The Phoenician plaque can be compared to a stone relief from Damascus (known to have sustained close ties with the Phoenician coast in our period) showing the same animal with similarly elongated body and high Egyptian crown (fig. 11).[40] There is also a stele said to be from Arad on the Phoenician coast, on which a similar couchant sphinx is carved in low relief below a field of volutes.[41]

When comparing the two ivory plaques, one is immediately struck by the lack of "Egyptian" features in the Syrian work. None of the decorative details, crown, headcloth, pectoral or uraeus bib, shown on the Phoenician work, is included on the other. Very different also is the extremely round face, puffy cheeks and broad nose of the Syrian sphinx as opposed to the more oval face and delicate features of the Phoenician. A similar contrast may be observed in the heavy proportions and short legs of the Syrian example when compared with the elongated, slender and long-legged body of the Phoenician sphinx. In addition, on the Phoenician plaque, the sphinx's wings curve up into the air in a delicate arc over the back, creating a counter-rhythm to the horizontal body and vertical head, while on the Syrian plaque, the wings are just folded back parallel with the body. The end result of this disposition of the wings is that on the Phoenician work, the viewer's eye travels from the sphinx's head, along the body and following the upward sweep of the wing, to cover the entire dimension of the plaque. On the Syrian piece, one's eye does not move, but rather is fixed concentrating on the massive block of the head and body.

Despite the fact that the sphinx is a "mythological" animal, the Phoenicians were clearly interested not only in grace and movement,

---

[38] Mallowan, *N&R* II, figs. 504 and 465, resp. I would like to express here my gratitude to Professor Edith Porada, whose initial observations on the Phoenician sphinx provided the stimulus to make this comparison.

[39] Cf. Orthmann, *USK*, Pls. 64b and 64d (Zincirli); Pl. 50b (Sakçe Gözü).

[40] M. Abu-al-Faraj al-Ush *et al.*, *Catalogue du Musée National de Damas*, (Damascus, 1969), fig. 15.

[41] H. Bossert, *Altsyrien* (Tübingen, 1951), no. 501.

but in representing accurately what would have been seen—as wit-
nessed by the attention given to the planes of overlapping headcloth,
pectoral and bib. The embarrassing juncture of wing and shoulder is
hidden by the pectoral, while in the Syrian piece, the wing simply juts
up to the right of the head at an awkward angle. What was apparently
important in the Syrian representation was not the "real" appearance
of the creature and the attributes associated with it, but the composite,
supernatural being itself as it existed in the mind of the Syrian carver.
Syrian art in this sense seems to adhere more to "conceptual" principles
than Phoenician art, which maintained greater ties with visual reality,
at least in decorative details.[42]

The Syrians have thus given up elegance and grace, as well as detail
of design, in order to preserve a sense of massive power in the image of
the sphinx. This overall impression is reinforced further by the differing
utilization of the space that surrounds the animal. The Syrian sphinx
seems to be pressing against the limits of its plaque, as if it were simply
too large or too powerful to be contained within. Very little extra space
exists within the rectangle, and even the curling tendrils of a tree-stump
at the far right press up against the animal's body.

The contrast with the Phoenician stirrup-shaped plaque is great.
There, a definite interplay of filled and empty spaces has been achieved.
The animal is well-planned into and comfortably contained within its
borders, and the plant elements are spaced to fill the voids between
the legs and between head and wing. In short, when one looks at the
Phoenician plaque one thinks first of the harmony, elegance and care-
ful design of the plaque as a whole. The motif clearly must have had
symbolic significance beyond its decorative function, but by virtue of
the attention given to design, one is a step further removed here from
the significance of the motif than with the Syrian representation, where
nothing separates the viewer from the impact of the sphinx's being.

It should also be noted that although in this case both sphinxes are
looking out of their plaques with frontal faces, this way of representing
the head, while quite common on Syrian pieces, is rare on Phoenician

---

[42] "Conceptual" art suggests that what is in the mind of the artist takes precedent
over visual reality (cf. E. Gombrich, *Art and Illusion* (New York, 1960), Ch. I). While
conceptual principles generally hold true for the art of the ancient Near East as a
whole (e.g., the sphinx itself is a "conceptual" creature), they do so to varying degrees,
depending upon the specific region or chronological period, as, for example, E. Akurgal
has demonstrated in the development of Neo-Assyrian relief carving (*The Art of Greece:
Its Origins* (New York, 1968), Ch. I).

works. Most Phoenician sphinxes look in the direction in which they are moving, and are therefore seen in profile (e.g., figs. 12 and 13).[43] The profile sphinx, when compared to a Syrian example, further emphasizes the remoteness and emotional dis-engagement of the Phoenician creature as opposed to the impact of the Syrian.[44]

For the source of the Phoenician disposition of space and proportion, we must again turn to Egypt, as it is just this sort of balanced and often symmetrical composition of slender, elegant figures that marks Egyptian decorative works of art, particularly jewellery. Excellent examples are afforded by the inlaid gold pectorals from the tomb of Princess Sit Hathor Yunet at Lahun, dated to the reign of Pharaoh Amenemhet III (1842–1797 B.C.) (cf. fig. 14).[45] I cite these works in particular, as they are contemporary with a number of similar pieces found in royal tombs at Byblos, on the Phoenician coast, which are also of Egyptian manufacture.[46] They provide concrete evidence for the exposure of the coastal cities to Egyptian works in the early second millennium B.C., just as archaeological finds and historical documents attest to the continued close relationship between Egypt and the Phoenician cities during the latter part of the millennium.[47]

---

[43] For example, Barnett, *CNI*, A.4, C.60, C.62; Mallowan, *N&R* I, fig. 67, and *N&R* II, figs. 506 and 523; Crowfoot and Crowfoot, *Samaria-Sebaste* II, Pls. V:3 and VII:7; and C. K. Wilkinson, "The First Millennium B.C.," *BMMA* 18 (1960), fig. 23 (= our Plate IVa).

[44] The significance of the frontal view has been interestingly discussed by W. La Barre, "Ethology and Ethnology: A Review article of O. M. Watson, *Proxemic Behavior: A Cross-Cultural Study*," in *Semiotica* 4 (1972), 83–96. In particular, he documents the frontal turn of the head in painting, film and television as a direct invasion of privacy which engages the viewer and does not permit "the dramatic illusion that one is watching a situation unseen" (pp. 90–1); that is, the viewer cannot remain uninvolved, whereas when figures are shown in profile, the spectator can remain out of direct contact. Therefore, the choice on the part of an artist or of a style for drawing heads in profile must be correlated with a *desire* for lack of direct contact.

[45] W. H. Hayes, *The Scepter of Egypt*, Vol. I (New York, 1953), fig. 150. In fact, Barnett has very aptly suggested (*PEQ*, 1939, 16) that the use of polychrome inlay in Phoenician ivories must be a further reflection of ties with Egypt, specifically indebted to the techniques used in inlaid jewellery, as the effect of the finished pieces must have been very much the same in the two media (cf., for example, our figs. 13 and 14).

[46] P. Montet, *Byblos et l'Egypte* (Paris, 1929), Pl. XCIV.

[47] I refer in particular to the trapezoidal piece of embossed gold foil from Tyre (H. Frankfort, *Art and Architecture of the Ancient Orient* (Baltimore, 1958), fig. 69), which was clearly made in the same workshop as a number of decorated gold foil pieces from the tomb of Tutankhamon at Thebes, as well as to the letters of the kings of Tyre and Byblos found at Amarna which make these connections explicit (cf. S. A. B. Mercer, ed., *The Tell el-Amarna Tablets* (Toronto, 1939), letters 146–155, 68–92 and 103–38).

One might seemingly digress for a moment to question the Egyptian origin of one of the pieces found at Byblos: a pectoral of thin, hammered gold, the semi-circular curve of which terminates in falcon heads at each end, while the centre is embossed with a full figure of a hawk with outstretched wings.[48] Most Egyptian pectorals of this sort do not repeat the bird in the centre when the two falcon heads are represented at either end.[49] Furthermore, the central bird occupies all the available space, his wings curving up to conform with the shape of the piece and filling the pectoral almost to the point of confusion, which is certainly not an Egyptian characteristic. The suggestion here, therefore, is that in this crucial period of the first half of the second millennium B.C., the local tradition of the Levant was naturally one in which space was more charged than in imported Egyptian works, but that by the early first millennium B.C., the Egyptian quality of balanced spatial distribution had been incorporated into the Phoenician tradition of the Levant coast, while the more inland areas such as North Syria, less subject to contact with and influence from Egypt, retained the sense of power of the motif through the filling of all available space.[50]

While we must look to Egypt, then, as an important factor in the development of the Phoenician style of the early first millennium, H. J. Kantor has demonstrated the debt which the North Syrian style owed not only to Hittite and Hurrian art as stated by Barnett, but also to Mycenaean tradition of the late second millennium.[51] The relationship is to be seen in the frequent use of pinnate foliage (indicating olive branches) and the "Mycenaean" scale pattern, in stylistic details like the flame-markings on the haunches of animals and the hair curls of winged griffins, and in the more active engagement of figures in scenes of human and/or animal combat observable on the pyxides from the Burnt Palace at Nimrud. Although we do not have a large corpus of

---

[48] Montet, *Byblos*, Pl. XCV (= our fig. 17).
[49] Cf. Egyptian examples of the New Kingdom: W. C. Hayes, *The Scepter of Egypt*, Vol. II (New York, 1959), fig. 74.
[50] This raises the question of the possibility of establishing a relative chronology for Phoenician art as it becomes *more* spatially balanced, since we really have so few excavated pieces upon which to base a firm sequence. This is, of course, beyond the scope of the present study, but it might be possible to establish, for example, that the more egyptianizing pieces, like metal bowls from the Etruscan tombs, are indeed later than some of the Phoenician bowls from Nimrud, which show more crowded figures and occasional motifs similar to North Syrian work.
[51] Barnett, *Iraq* 2, 190–191; H. J. Kantor, "Syro-Palestinian Ivories," *JNES* 15 (1956), 173–4.

pyxides in Phoenician style with which to compare the Syrian examples, it does seem as if it is the North Syrian group which has preserved more strongly those qualities associated with the earlier Mycenaean style of ivory carving. Thus, a hunting scene depicted on a rectangular panel from an ivory gaming board of "Cypro-Mycenaean" style found at Enkomi, with its blanketed horses and chariot with six-spoked wheel, so closely resembles a similar hunting scene on one of the pyxides from Nimrud that only details such as the hairdo of one of the chariot followers or the flying gallop of the animals mark the Enkomi piece as a work of the second millennium B.C., separated by some four centuries from the Nimrud pyxis (compare figs. 19 and 2).[52]

All of the distinctions we have made thus far between Phoenician and North Syrian ivories may be summed up through one last comparison: the motif of a male figure slaying a griffin. On each of the four plaques of the first millennium here illustrated (figs. 20–23),[53] the position of the griffin is reversed, with its fore-quarters toward the ground, and the convention is followed of stabbing the animal through its open mouth. Despite these similarities, however, the Phoenician and Syrian examples separate themselves quite readily.

One of the Phoenician plaques was originally inlaid, and bits of blue paste still adhere to the wing-segments (fig. 20). The griffin-slayer is represented with an Egyptian-style wig and wears a short bordered tunic beneath an open skirt. The second plaque (fig. 21) was simply carved in low relief, and the hero there wears the double crown of Egypt, an Egyptian-style collar, and a short kilt with centre fold and flap between the legs. His facial features are rather negroid, similar to those of a Nubian with a monkey and an oryx, also from Nimrud, carved in the round.[54]

Notwithstanding these differences in attire and in technique, the two works have clearly been made in the same tradition. Both heroes and griffins are winged, and the spacing of the two sets of wings is complementary, like two registers of volute arms in a sacred tree. Their elegant upward curve creates a rhythm that contrasts with the downward diagonal of the spear. All four of the griffin's feet are planted on the ground, and only its head twists back to receive the spearpoint.

---

[52] Barnett, *PEQ*, 1939, Pl. VIII:1 and Barnett, *CNI* S.1.
[53] Mallowan, *N&R* II, figs. 455, 485, 558 and 559.
[54] Ibid., fig. 443.

The horizontal form of its body balances the diagonals created by the forward-leaning stride of the hero. No individual detail is allowed to predominate, and the delicate rhythm of opposing elements creates a sense of harmony and elegance, as with the Phoenician sphinx of fig. 8 and its Egyptian antecedents.

On the two Syrian plaques (figs. 22 and 23), both heroes wear a headdress obviously based upon the Egyptian crown. It is not clear whether the source of this Egyptian element is to be found in third-hand borrowing from Phoenician work of the first millennium, or in a Syrian tradition continuing from the second millennium, in which Egyptian details were apparent in works from Syrian sites such as Ras Shamra and Alalakh.[55] It is clear that it is a tradition at some remove, however, as the crown is squashed into a very small space, and the inside element of the double crown is entirely misunderstood, looking rather like a sagging beanbag.

The two Syrian heroes are again dressed differently: one in an over-garment open in front, beneath which is visible a short tunic or kilt; the other in a simple short tunic, belted and tied at the waist. The details are sufficiently distinct to suggest that the two were carved by different hands, yet like their Phoenician counterparts, they both exhibit very similar stylistic traits.

Only the griffins are winged here. It is initially difficult to determine to whom or where the wings are attached. In each case, the hind legs of the griffin are thrown up against the sides of the plaques, and this diagonal body, plus the bent knee of the hero, expresses the force necessary in subduing such a formidable adversary. A representation of a similar scene has been preserved on an ivory mirror handle from Enkomi, again in "Cypro-Mycenaean" style and dating to the second millennium B.C. (fig. 18).[56] On the Enkomi ivory, the kilted hero with round shield plunges his sword into the breast of a rampant winged griffin, the head of which is thrown back in the agony of the attack.

---

[55] For example, alabaster vases found at Ras Shamra (C. F. A. Schaeffer, *Ugaritica* III (Paris, 1956), 164–226 and figs. 118–204), and Egyptian elements on otherwise Syrian-style cylinder seals from Alalakh (C. L. Woolley, *Alalakh* (Oxford, 1955), Pls. LX:12A, LXIII:64 and LXVI:135). In any event, it had been on the basis of such details on the Loftus ivories that W. Ll. Brown had pointed out in his review of Barnett, *CNI* (in *PEQ*, 1958, 65–9), that it is an oversimplification to state that there is no Egyptian influence in the Syrian group; it is rather a question of degree in relation to the Phoenician group.

[56] Barnett, *PEQ*, 1939, Pl. VII:2.

It is clear that it is the Syrian group with its wingless hero and more violent action that is most closely akin to the Enkomi example. The force of battle is further emphasized by the strong diagonal thrust of the sword, especially in the plaque of the hero in short tunic, where that thrust dominates the whole piece (fig. 23). Man and animal are packed without a spare inch into the rectangular space of each plaque and seem to fight against the very borders as if ready to burst out of the frame.

Once again then, as with the female sphinxes, the impact of the Syrian representation is considerably stronger than the Phoenician. This is achieved through the greater sense of action, squatter more powerful proportions and more highly charged space of the Syrian carvings, as opposed to the more quiescent, elegant and slender figures harmoniously disposed in space with an attempt at balance between *plein et vide* that is characteristic of the Phoenician works, and supplements the distinctions made by Poulsen, Barnett and Kantor with regard to the iconographic and stylistic details appropriate to the two groups.

Part II: Distribution

With the foregoing stylistic distinctions as a guiding principle, we have attempted to study the known collections of ivory carving of the first millennium B.C. in order to assign pieces to their appropriate stylistic families, and then to plot the occurrence of "Syrian" and "Phoenician" works on separate distribution maps, to see whether in fact a meaningful pattern may ensue.[57]

It will be noted that provisions have been made on the maps to indicate finds consisting of a single object and finds of more than one object by the size of the dots, is well as for locally produced ivories which seem to be derivative, represented as a circle.

---

[57] Bibliographical references to each entry on the distribution maps have been included as a separate list (cf. p. 13).

Map, Fig. 24

Al Mina	E. Akurgal, *The Art of Greece*, fig. 77.
Altıntepe	T. Özgüç, *Altıntepe II* (Turk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları V, Serie I, No. 27; Ankara, 1969), Pls. XXII–III.
Athens Dipylon Cem.	P. Demargne, *The Birth of Greek Art* (New York, 1964), figs. 380–1.
Camirus	D. G. Hogarth, *Excavations at Ephesus: The Archaic Artemision* (London, 1908), Pls. XXX–XXXI.
Delphi	P. Amandry, "Rapport préliminaire sur les statues chryselephantines de Delphes," *BCH* 63 (1939), Pl. 37.
Ephesus	D. Hogarth, *Ephesus*, Pls. XXIII–XXVI.
Gordion	R. S. Young, "The 1961 Campaign at Gordion," *AJA* 66 (1962), Pls. 46 and 47.
Hama	H. Ingholt, *Rapport préliminaire sur sept campagnes de fouilles à Hama, 1932–38* (Copenhagen, 1940), Pl. 34:3–5 (= Barnett, *CNI*, figs. 11 and 12).
Hasanlu	Muscarella, *BMMA* 25, figs. 6 and 10; and unpublished material in Tehran and Philadelphia (MS. in preparation by Muscarella).
Idean Cave	E. Kunze, "Orientalische Schnitzerein aus Kreta" *Ath. Mitt.* 60–61 (1935–6), 222.
Lindos	R. Blinkenberg, *Lindos I: Les petits objets* (Berlin, 1931), Pls. 64,77.
Nimrud	Barnett, *CNI*; and Mallowan, *N&R* I and II, passim.
Perachora	R. D. Barnett, "Early Greek and Oriental Ivories," *JHS* 68 (1948), 6.
Samos	H. Walther, "Orientalische Kultgeräte," *Ath. Mitt.* 74 (1959), Pls. 118 and 119.
Sparta	R. Dawkins, *The Sanctuary of Artemis Orthia* (London, 1929) Pls. CXLVIII, CLIII.
Tell Halaf	B. Hrouda, *T.H.IV*, Pls. 9:46–58; 10:59–69; 11:70–77; 12:80–81; 43:271.
Tell Rifa'at	M. V. Seton Williams, "Preliminary Report on the Excavations at Tell Rifa'at," *Iraq* 23 (1961), Pl. XLI:5.
Tell Tainat	Oriental Institute Museum A. 27626, A. 27491, T. 741 (unpublished).
Toprak Kale	Barnett, *CNI*, W. 11, 13, 14.
Zincirli	Von Luschan, *AiS V*, Pls. 65a, 68, 70, 71.

Map, Fig. 25

Arslan Tash	Thureau-Dangin, *Arslan Tash, Atlas*, Pls. XIX–XLIV; Wilkinson, *BMMA* 18, fig. 23.
Beth Zur	C. DeCamps de Mertzenfeld, *Inventaire commenté des ivoires phéniciens* (Paris, 1954), Pl. CXXVI:1269.
Byblos	Montet, *Byblos et l'Egypte, no.* 878.
Carchemish	Woolley and Barnett, *Carchemish* III, Pl. 71:f.
Gezer	Dever et al., *Gezer II*, p. 43.
Hazor	Y. Yadin et al., *Hazor I*, pp. 16, 41; *Hazor II*, p. 45.

Khorsabad	Loud and Altman, *Khorsabad* II, Pls. 51–6.
Lindos	Blinkenberg, *Lindos* I, Pls. 9:133; 15:419; 16:421; 28:686.
Megiddo	Loud, *Megiddo* II, Pl. CCIV:3.
Mount Ida	Kunze, *Ath. Mitt.*, 60–61, Pl. 84.
Nimrud	Barnett, *CNI*; and Mallowan, *N&R* I and II, passim.
Salamis	Karageorghis, *Salamis*, Pls. IV–VIII.
Samaria	Crowfoot, *Samaria-Sebaste* II, Pls. I–IV, V:2–4, VI, VII, X–XXI.
Samos	E. Buschor, "Samos 1952–7" in *Neue Deutsche Ausgrabungen in Mittelmeergebiet und in Vorderen Orient* (Berlin, 1959), fig. 13; and B. Freyer-Schauenburg, *Elfenbein aus dem Samischen Heraion* (Hamburg, 1966), Pls. 12a, 15a, 16a and b, 26a, 29a and b, 30a.
Sarepta	Pritchard, *Sarepta*, fig. 43:1.
Sultantepe	S. Lloyd and N. Gokçe, "Sultantepe," *An. St.* 3 (1953), Pl V:a.

Thus we see that ivories in North Syrian style (fig. 24) are found from Hasanlu in the east to Greece (and actually even to Etruria) in the west.[58] It will be noted that the finds circle around the general region of North Syria. This supports the stylistic evidence for their origin, as, "all other factors being equal, a trait or artifact type probably originated somewhere near the centre of its distribution".[59] At the same time, those non-North Syrian cultures in which North Syrian ivories have been found, represented by the sites of Hasanlu, Altıntepe and Gordion tend also to have produced either concurrently or shortly thereafter a local style derived from a North Syrian stimulus. The effect of North Syrian work is even apparent at sites in Greece and Ionia in which no actual North Syrian works have been found.[60]

---

[58] Although for purposes of space the present maps do not extend further west than Greece, two ivory carvings found in Etruscan tombs appear to be of Syrian type: one from Praeneste (W. Ll. Brown, *The Etruscan Lion* (Oxford, 1960), Pl. I), the other from Cervetri (ibid., Pl. XIII:b). P. R. S. Moorey has also been kind enough to inform me of the existence of a small (4 cm. high) head in "Syrian" style found at Kish during the 1926–7 season (= excavation no. X.615 from Trench A.3 on Tell Ingharra, currently in Baghdad, IM 4374). I have not yet had an opportunity to study the piece, however Dr. Moorey notes that its archaeological context is one of debris, although "perfectly in accord with the usual datings" (personal communication).

[59] L. R. Binford, "Archaeology as Anthropology," *Am. Ant.* 28 (1962), 224.

[60] In order to distinguish local adaptations from imported goods, it is necessary first to determine the geographical limit of the primary area, including regional subdivisions, and then to demonstrate that the group has indeed been diffused beyond its original cultural region. It should then be possible to describe those modifications and transformations which are introduced by the adaptive culture. This is a process for which there are few guidelines (cf. D. Clarke, *Analytical Archaeology*, (London, 1968), 414), however such analysis is crucial to the recognition of special, regional adaptations such as the "local" style at Hasanlu (Muscarella, *BMMA* 25, 121–36) or the "orientalizing" phase in Greece (Akurgal, *Art of Greece*, Ch. VI).

Study of the distribution of Phoenician style ivories (fig. 25) must be preceded by reiteration of the fact that the major cities of Phoenicia as noted in the contemporary Assyrian annals (Tyre, Sidon, Byblos, Arka)[61] remain unexcavated in early first millennium levels, so that it will not be possible to see the identical pattern of concentration in the nuclear area as it was for North Syria. Nevertheless, a distinctly Egyptianizing Phoenician-style ivory head has recently been discovered at the site of Sarepta on the Phoenician coast, to add to the single find known from Byblos, and there is also a distinct cluster of sites at which Phoenician ivories have been found in Palestine and in Cyprus, both of which had easy access to the Levantine coast and with both of which the Phoenicians had close ties.[62]

Although there are some places in which the two styles are found together—e.g., Nimrud, Lindos, Samos—the former, at least, is certainly due to the Assyrians' active practice of collecting ivories from all sides, and the Samian sanctuaries too contained a very eclectic range of goods.[63] These sites notwithstanding, it is clear that the geographical range of Phoenician ivories is essentially quite distinct from that of the North Syrian works, in that it is located more to the south and west; and this reinforces conclusions reached on stylistic grounds that the two represent quite distinct archaeological entities. This would tend to weaken the suggestion of Barnett that the ancient city of Hamath (modern Hama) on the Orontes was the centre of production of both

[61] Luckenbill, *ARAB* I, §§ 479, 578, 614, 769, 772; *ARAB* II, §§ 239, 590, 690.
[62] V. Karageorghis, *Salamis* (New York, 1969), 23 and Pls. IV, V, VII, VIII; A. Dupont-Sommer, "Les Phéniciens à Chypre," *Report of the Department of Antiquities, Cyprus* (Nicosia, 1974), 75–94; for Palestine, apart from the references in *I Kings* and *I Chronicles*, the evidence is mainly that of pottery, for which, cf. R. Amiran, *Ancient Pottery of the Holy Land*, (Rutgers, 1970), 272–5. Phoenician-style ivories have also been found at Praeneste in Etruria (Brown, *Etruscan Lion*, Pl. XIV:b; and C. D. Curtis, "The Barberini Tomb", *MAAR* 5 (1925), Pls. 9–11), at Tharros in Sardinia (unpublished; personal communication, W. Culican), at Carthage (Harden, *The Phoenicians*, fig. 75; and P. Gauckler, *Necropoles puniques de Carthage*, I (Paris, 1915), Pls. CXLIII:1,2, CL, CLI, ibid., vol. II, fig. 419), and in the Carmona region of southern Spain (Hispanic Society of America, *Catalogue of Engraved Ivories* (New York, 1928), Pls. I–XLVIII). To date, no Syrian ivories have been found in the Far West, with which only the Phoenicians had historical ties (cf. below).
[63] Cf. in this regard, U. Jantzen, *Samos VIII: Ägyptische und orientalische Bronzen aus dem Heraion von Samos* (Bonn, 1972), and reviews by O. W. Muscarella, *AJA* 77 (1973), 236–7, and H.-V. Herrmann, *Gnomon* 46 (1975), 392–402. Several of the pieces had been previously published by G. Kopcke, "Heraion von Samos: Die Kampagnen 1961/1965 in Sudtemenos," *Ath. Mitt.* 83 (1968), 250–314, with excellent discussion of foreign relations.

the Syrian and the Phoenician style,[64] since one would assume that if the two groups were being distributed from a common source, they would demonstrate a similar spatial flow.

Thus far, we have only considered factors of spatial distribution in looking at the maps. The great problem with the standard distribution map is that it provides no indication of variations in space according to time, thus omitting chronological factors which must then be verbalized.[65]

Relatively few of the ivories plotted on the two maps have been excavated in contexts which allow for great precision of date within the general period of the ninth-seventh centuries B.C. For the North Syrian material, the firmest date we possess is for the ivories found at Hasanlu in Northwest Iran. The citadel of Hasanlu level IV B, in which the ivories were found, was destroyed by fire by the Urarteans toward the end of the ninth century B.C.[66] The date of the ivories then must precede this destruction, and thus the sealed archaeological context serves as a basis for the suggestion that similar and sometimes identical ivories found at Nimrud and at Tell Halaf are also products of the ninth century, although preserved as heirlooms into later periods (cf. figs. 15 and 16).[67] At the other end of the chronological spectrum, it is significant that no North Syrian ivories have been found in the late

---

[64] Barnett, *CNI*, 46–9.

[65] The tendency to ignore chronological differences in the distribution of artifacts is referred to in R. McC. Adams, "Anthropological Perspectives on Ancient Trade," *Current Anthropology* 15 (1974), 240. New three-dimensional graphs have been devised to deal with three factors concurrently, for which cf. Clarke, *Analytical Archaeology*, 430; however the present case includes too many variables to attempt such a diagram here.

[66] R. H. Dyson, Jr., "Problems of Protohistoric Iran as seen from Hasanlu," *JNES* 24 (1965), 202.

[67] The Burnt Palace at Nimrud was apparently not destroyed until 614 B.C. with the sack of the city just prior to the fall of the Assyrian Empire (Mallowan, *N&R* I, 204–5); however this would not preclude at all the ivories being considerably earlier and kept as heirlooms, which in fact seems to have been the case if one takes into account the virtual identity of some of the pieces with those from Hasanlu (esp. Barnett, *CNI*, S.13, as compared to Muscarella, *BMMA* 25, fig. 6). As far as the ivories from Tell Halaf are concerned, these fragments, too, are stylistically very close to the published Hasanlu pieces and those from the Burnt Palace. Hrouda argued that they must be ninth or even tenth century in date (*Tell Halaf IV: Die Kleinfunde*, 10 and 117), based upon their stylistic similarity to the Halaf reliefs and their discovery in a cremation burial jar below the Kapara building level, as well as the association of the jar in which the ivories were found with pottery of the mid-ninth century from Hama and the ʿAmuq. Now that there are not only similarly marked animal fragments but also a virtually identical small female head in the round wearing a high polos from Hasanlu (discovered in the 1974 season, = Has. 74N-225, 636, 502 and 311, unpublished),

eighth-century palace of Sargon II at Khorsabad, or in any context clearly datable to the seventh century.

Phoenician ivories, on the other hand, occur in quantity at Khorsabad, and pieces found in the West (Cyprus, Carthage, Spain, Samos, Etruria) are all from late eighth- and seventh-century contexts.[68] The single piece found at Sultantepe in North Mesopotamia is from a closed seventh-century context. Therefore, it and the Phoenician style ivories found at Arslan Tash, the only two clear incursions of the Phoenician style into the North Syrian sphere of influence, may be demonstrated to have arrived at a time after the Assyrians had assumed control of the region. Indeed, we know that in the mid-seventh century B.C., Assurbanipal (668–627 B.C.) actually had Phoenicians working in the area—at Bireçik, just north of Carchemish on the Euphrates, and in easy access of Sultantepe as well.[69] Therefore the seven plaques of a droopy-leafed palmette plant, all apparently part of a single furniture-panel found in the Temple of the Storm God at Carchemish, which seem to be of Phoenician type similar to others found at Nimrud, Khorsabad, Arslan Tash and Samaria, may well have been part of the Temple furniture brought to Carchemish during the Assyrian occupation, as we know that the town was resettled by Assyrians after Sargon's taking of Carchemish in 717 B.C., and that the king actually built a palace on the citadel.[70]

Conversely, there is not a single instance in which a Phoenician style ivory can be firmly dated to the ninth century. Attempts to date the Samaria ivories to that period are not convincing, principally because the ivories come from a disturbed context in the palace courtyard and because in any event the building is known to have been in use until the destruction by Shalmaneser V and the subsequent suppression of

---

arguments for a ninth century date for the so-called "Brandgrab" ivories from Tell Halaf seems assured.

[68] Although the dating of the shrine in which the Sarepta ivory has been found is not secure, it has been tentatively set at the eighth-seventh century B.C. on the basis of the objects found within (cf. J. B. Pritchard, *Sarepta: A Preliminary Report on the Iron Age* (Philadelphia, 1975), 40). As support for this, and quite consistent with the picture which we wish to establish here, Pritchard has noted that the best stylistic parallel for the Sarepta head comes from ivory carvings of Phoenician style found at Khorsabad (ibid., 26–8, with reference to Loud and Altman, *Khorsabad* II, Pl. 5a and figs. 42 and 43).

[69] Cf. F. Delitzsch, "Assurbanipal und die assyrische Kultur," *An Or* 11 (1910), 5f., as cited in B. Hrouda, *Die Kulturgeschichte des assyrischen Flachbildes* (Bonn, 1965), 147.

[70] Woolley and Barnett, *Carchemish* III, Pl. 71f. and pp. 167 and 211.

resistance by Sargon in 720 B.C.[71] Certainly, the antiquity ascribed to very early Phoenician activity in the West has been justifiably questioned, with the best evidence being in the later eighth century for installations beyond Cyprus.[72] While this would not preclude close relations with Egypt, Cyprus and Palestine or luxury production in commodities such as ivory prior to that time, there is at present no concrete evidence to support ninth-century dates for material found thus far.

Although this is not the occasion for an extensive discussion of the Phoenician and North Syrian styles as found in metalwork, it is significant to note that the same criteria as apply to the ivories may be used to distinguish works in bronze, silver and gold, and that furthermore, the identical chronological ranges can be observed.

According to the criteria we have established, the well-known bronze bowl found in the Kerameikos cemetery in Athens is clearly a North Syrian work, and may be dated, based upon associated Greek pottery, to the decade 840–830 B.C.[73] The siren cauldron attachments from Greece, Gordion and Van, now recognized to be North Syrian, seem to indicate a quite shallow distribution in time within the eighth century. Stylistic parallels of some of the sirens as presented by Herrmann may push the beginnings of the figures into the ninth century, but none can be said to be of the seventh.[74]

---

[71] Cf. various references in Crowfoot and Crowfoot, *Samaria-Sebaste* II: *Early Ivories*, 2–4; J. W. Crowfoot, K. M. Kenyon and E. L. Sukenik, *Samaria-Sebaste* I: *The Buildings at Samaria* (London, 1942), 110–11; and J. W. Crowfoot, G. M. Crowfoot and K. M. Kenyon, *Samaria-Sebaste* III: *The Objects from Samaria* (London, 1957) 94–7. For a more complete discussion of the evidence, cf. the forthcoming review of Mallowan and Herrmann, *SW7*, in *AJA* 80 (1976), by the present author.

[72] R. Carpenter, "Phoenicians in the West," *AJA* 62 (1958), 35–53; E. Forrer, "Karthago würde erst 673/663 vor Christ gegrundet," in H. Kirsch, ed., *Festschrift Franz Dornsieff* (Leipzig, 1953), 85–93; and more recently, J. D. Muhly, "Homer and the Phoenicians: The Relations between Greece and the Near East in the Late Bronze and Early Iron Ages," *Berytus* 19 (1970), 19–64.

[73] K. Kübler, "Ausgrabungen im Kerameikos," *AA* 55 (1940), figs. 19–20. See especially the hair and dress of figures and the stylization of animals as compared with ivory pyxides of North Syrian style from Nimrud. The motif of holding the tail of an animal is also found on reliefs from Carchemish (Woolley and Lawrence, *Carchemish* II, Pl. B.10a) and on the bronze equestrian frontlet from Tell Tainat (*H. J.* Kantor, "A Bronze Plaque with Relief Design from Tell Tainat," *JNES* 21 (1961), Pl. XII). Kübler's dates for the associated pottery from the Kerameikos tomb are corroborated by the more recent excavation of a grave in the Athenian agora: cf. E. L. Smithson, "The Tomb of a Rich Athenian Lady," *Hesperia* 37 (1968), 77–111, as compared to K. Kübler, *Kerameikos V* (Berlin, 1954), Pls. 28a and 73a.

[74] H.-V. Herrmann, *Die Kessel der orientalisierende Zeit* (Olympische Forschungen, Bd. VI; Berlin, 1966), 87.

Similarly, dates indicated for Phoenician metalwork (e.g., pieces found in tombs at Salamis and in Etruria)[75] are consistent with the chronological range suggested for the ivories: no known works can be demonstrated to belong before the eighth century, while several examples extend into seventh-century contexts.

It must be explicitly stated that much of the above is based upon negative evidence. New excavations, particularly on the Phoenician coast may turn up well-dated Phoenician ivories and metalwork of the ninth century; however, for the present we must use the evidence that we have, and it would seem that we might tentatively draw some conclusions based upon that evidence. Thus it would appear that the chronological as well as the spatial distribution of North Syrian ivories is independent of that of the Phoenician: that while North Syrian products were reaching Greece and Iran in the ninth century B.C., there is no evidence for production of Phoenician works at that time; that both styles overlap during the course of the eighth century; and that only the Phoenician material seems to be still in production in the seventh century.

Barnett has suggested that the absence of North Syrian ivories after the eighth century B.C. may be due to the extinction of the Syrian elephant, known to have inhabited the Khabur region of the upper Euphrates in this period, and probably a major source of the raw material for the Syrian carvers.[76] However, when it becomes apparent that the cessation of goods in Syrian style is not confined to ivory, but is also true of metalwork, one is forced to search for a more complex explanation of this phenomenon. It is my opinion that the answer must be sought in the respective geographic locations of Phoenicia and North Syria, in the resultant differences in the routes and means by which goods were carried and distributed, and in the very distinct nature of Assyrian policy with regard to the two regions, all of which factors were closely interrelated.

A full discussion of these factors is beyond the scope of the present study, the purpose of which is essentially to expand the criteria by which we may distinguish Phoenician and North Syrian art; however, brief treatment is called for in order to place the distinctions we have made into a broader historical and cultural perspective.

---

[75] Karageorghis, *Salamis*, figs. 21, 24, 26; Poulsen, *Der Orient*, figs. 14–15 (Praeneste), 17–19 (Cervetri), 20 (Salerno), and 123 (Vetulonia); E. Gjerstad, "Decorated Metal Bowls from Cyprus," *Op. Arch.* 4 (1946), Pls. VIII and IX.

[76] *CNI*, 166.

As David Oates has noted, "Geography does not dictate human action. It imposes the limitations and creates the opportunities of economic and hence political development."[77] Thus, the inland position of North Syria must have provided very different opportunities from the coastal position of Phoenicia. Any history of North Syria must therefore be seen in light of its crucial location at the crossroads of all of the major land routes of the ancient Near East, not least of which were those which gave access to the rich metal deposits of southeast Anatolia.[78] The Amanus mountains, running parallel to the Syrian coast, have traditionally rendered the coastal strip a region apart from the hinterland, so that when it was a question of North Syrian goods being desired in the Mediterranean, it was the Greeks who came to establish themselves on the coast, and not the North Syrians who built ships to carry the goods out.[79] Phoenicia, on the other hand, situated as it was on the coast and roughly equivalent in territory to modern Lebanon, was directly engaged in the distribution of goods across the sea. By the late eighth century, colonies had already been established in Sardinia, Sicily, Malta, North Africa and Spain.[80]

Surely, it is at least in part a consequence of these variant geographical factors that Assyrian policy differs considerably in dealing with the two regions. From the time that the Assyrian kings began moving west across the Euphrates in the early ninth century B.C., there were concerted attempts to incorporate the North Syrian states into Assyria's broader scheme of empire. Aššurnaṣirpal II (883–859 B.C.) claimed tribute from all, although he engaged few states in military conflict, notably Hattina (Patina), in his initial march to the Mediterranean; his son, Shalmaneser III (858–824 B.C.) defeated the Aramaean state of Bit-Adini, claimed the capital of Til Barsib as his royal city, and moved on across the Euphrates meeting most of the North Syrian states in

---

[77] D. Oates, *Studies in the Ancient History of North Iraq* (London, 1968), 118.

[78] Cf. A. Goetze, "The Struggle for the Domination of Syria (1400–1300 B.C.)," *CAH* fascicule 37 (1965), 3.

[79] For a discussion of the Amanus as a geographical barrier and the resultant separateness of the Syrian coastal strip, cf. M. V. Seton-Williams, "Cilician Survey," *An. St.* 4 (1954), 121 and 126. The date and role of the Al Mina colony has been studied by J. Boardman, "Tarsus, Al Mina and Greek Chronology," *JHS* 85 (1965), 5–15, and by J. du Plat-Taylor, "The Cypriot and Syrian Pottery from Al Mina," *Iraq* 21 (1959), 62–96; the colony and other early Greek installations on the Syrian coast are also discussed by P. J. Riis, *Sukas I: The North East Sanctuary and the First Settlement of the Greeks in Syria and Palestine* (Copenhagen, 1970).

[80] Cf. above, note 73.

battle, eventually to conquer Hattina.[81] Most of Assyrian influence was dissipated during the period of relative Assyrian weakness in the first half of the eighth century, however, and it is clear from the treaty of Aššur-nirari V with Mati'el of Arpad (c. 754 B.C.) that the two countries were bound merely by formality.[82] With the first mention in texts by Tiglath-pileser III (738 B.C.), Sam'al appears as a vassal state; revolt was put down in Hattina, which received an Assyrian governor; Arpad was taken in 740; and the entire organization of the Empire was recast, incorporating the new provinces into the system.[83]

While these early attempts at control were organized in terms of the establishment of vassal states, the installation of Assyrian governors, and the annexation of provinces, there was a sharp change in policy toward the Neo-Hittite states with the accession of Sargon II of Assyria in 722 B.C. Although kings prior to Sargon subdued and reorganized, they did not basically devastate. Sargon, however, literally destroyed Hamath in 720, Carchemish in 717, Malatya partially in 712 and entirely along with Kummuḫ in 708, and Maraş in 711.[84] He also engaged in large-scale de- and re-populations, a practice exercised from the time of Aššurnaṣirpal II, but here put into action on an unprecedented scale: moving people of Kummuḫ to Elam, people of Gozan (Tell Halaf) to Babylon, and carrying off the population of Carchemish to Assyria, while at the same time moving Samaritans into Gozan, Mannaeans to Hamath, Nairi to Hatti, and Chaldeans of Bit-Iakin to Malatya.[85]

Here, I believe, is the key to the limits of North Syrian production. In principle, Sargon destroyed in order to rebuild and resettle, and we know from a single inscribed brick found at Carchemish that he had

---

[81] Luckenbill, *ARAB* I, §§ 447 and 475–9 (Aššurnaṣirpal); ibid., §§ 599–603, 608–611 and 655 (Shalmaneser).

[82] Ibid., §§ 750–60.

[83] Ibid., §§ 769; and H. W. F. Saggs, "The Nimrud Letters, 1952—Part II: Relations with the West," *Iraq* 17 (1955), 144–54, for a discussion of proceedings during the reign of Tiglath-pileser III.

[84] Luckenbill, *ARAB* II, §§ 5, 8, 26, 29, 45.

[85] Ibid., §§ 8, 41, 46, 56; as a practice of Aššurnaṣirpal II, cf. D. J. Wiseman, "A New Stela of Aššur-Naṣir-Pal II," *Iraq* 14 (1952), 30, ll. 33–36. It is implied in one of the letters from Nineveh (L. Waterman, *Royal Correspondence of the Assyrian Empire* (Ann Arbor, 1930–6), § 317) that some individuals from Carchemish were being sent to Babylon as well. An interesting glimpse into the reality of these repopulations is to be found in yet another letter (Waterman, *Royal Correspondence*, § 633), which makes reference to a "man of Samaria" in Gozan; he must have been a product of just this sort of rearrangement.

a palace constructed there.[86] Yet, even if one cannot literally apply Tacitus' phrase regarding the Roman armies: "They made (of cities) a desolation and called it peace,"[87] the traumatic effect of these policies of initial destruction and subsequent deportation had to have had an enormous impact on the various functioning systems of the cities he destroyed.

Such a phenomenon was observed also in the wake of Moslem wars in the Middle East over the course of four centuries, where policies of scorched cities and governmental breakdowns led to the destruction of agricultural production, a decrease in population, and a general decline in manufacturing production and the capacity to export goods.[88] At that time, too, as was the case in the Neo-Assyrian period, conquest was accompanied by the specific deportation of craftsmen, further reducing the potential for production.[89] From the administrative documents of Nimrud and Nineveh it is clear that already during the reign of Sargon, and certainly in the succeeding reigns of Sennacherib (704–681 B.C.) and Esarhaddon (680–669 B.C.), the North Syrian economy was in bad shape.[90] Sargon's reign ended with his death in 705, and it is precisely around this time, toward the end of the eighth century B.C., that we have what appears to be the cessation of North Syrian luxury goods such as ivory and fine metal work. This production, I would submit, was integrally linked to a viable economy, and in this case had been irreparably impaired by the campaigns and policies of Sargon.

---

[86] Woolley and Barnett, *Carchemish* III, 211.

[87] Tacitus, *Agricola* 30:5.

[88] C. Issawi, "The Decline of Middle Eastern Trade," in D. S. Richards, ed., *Islam and the Trade of Asia* (London, 1970), 246–50.

[89] The value of craftsmen amongst captives is clearly indicated in an administrative text from Nimrud (B. Parker, "Administrative Tablets from the North-West Palace, Nimrud," *Iraq* 23 (1961), 47), and is discussed by A. L. Oppenheim, "Trade in the Ancient Near East," *V International Congress of Economic History* (*Leningrad, 10–14 August 1970*), (Moscow, 1970), 11.

[90] The main source of information in this case is the Nineveh correspondence. However scanty the evidence, we catch brief glimpses of the problems in the western provinces. Sennacherib as crown prince writes to his father, Sargon II, that "abundance is not strong" in Kummuḫ and tribute meagre (Waterman, *Royal Correspondence*, § 196). By the two following reigns, we read that taxes are so heavy men occasionally flee to escape payment (ibid., §§ 252, 1009). In addition, there are reports of the poor administration of the provinces, the malfunction of officials, failure of crops and large-scale with-holding of taxes (ibid., §§ 3, 43, 421, 500, 1201; and also from Nimrud, H. W. F. Saggs, "The Nimrud Letters, 1952—Part VII," *Iraq* 27 (1965), 27).

A very different situation pertains in Phoenicia, which is not merely
due to the fact of being further away and therefore more inaccessible to
the Assyrian military machine. Tiglath-pileser III had sent his military
commander to Tyre and set up six governors in Phoenician cities to
collect taxes and regulate trade.[91] Eventually, expanding upon the Syr-
ian conquests of Sargon II, Sidon was besieged by Sennacherib in 701
B.C. and again in the reign of Esarhaddon; Tyre was supposedly taken
by Esarhaddon in 670 (although Aššurbanipal had to campaign there
again in 665).[92] Defensive walls were razed; controls were established;
but the region was never totally destroyed.[93]

This was clearly intentional. For, unlike in North Syria, where control
of the overland routes could be exercised by Assyrians, the Phoenicians
by virtue of their foreign sea trade were able to provide goods and
services (like supplies of silver from the Rio Tinto mines in southern
Spain)[94] which the Assyrians could not otherwise obtain, as they were
neither equipped nor ready to assume the risks of taking on the maritime
activities themselves.[95] The Assyrians did attempt to hold very tight reins
on Phoenicia, as is evident from the treaty of Esarhaddon with Baʾalu
of Tyre;[96] however their administration was organized mainly in terms
of limiting Phoenician freedom of trade and establishing themselves as
principal recipients.[97] It was as a result of this policy, I would suggest,

---

[91] Luckenbill, *ARAB* I, §§ 803, 815.

[92] Luckenbill, *ARAB* II, §§ 239, 527, 556, 779.

[93] Cf. on this also, R. Revere, "No-Man's Coast: Ports of Trade in the Eastern
Mediterranean," in K. Polanyi, ed., *Trade and Market in the Early Empires* (Glencoe, Ill.,
1957), 56.

[94] A. Blanco and J. M. Luzon, "Pre-Roman Silver Mines at Rio Tinto," *Antiquity*
43 (1969), 124–31. The identification of Phoenicia in terms of its maritime activities
is clearly reflected in the inscription of Shalmaneser III on his bronze gates from
Balawat (*ARAB* I, § 614), where it is noted explicitly: "I received the tribute *of the ships*
of the men of Tyre and Sidon," (italics ours) in lieu of the usual formula, "tribute of
the men or the king of GN."

[95] That sea trade entails greater commercial risks than overland trade has been
discussed by M. Trolle Larsen, *The Old Assyrian City-State and its Colonies* (Copenhagen,
1975), 45. In a similar case, Babylon is granted the privilege of unrestricted trade by
Esarhaddon (cf. A. L. Oppenheim, *Ancient Mesopotamia*, (Chicago, 1964), 94), and this
must at least in part have been related to the fact that the extension of Babylon's trade
network into the Persian gulf was beyond the means of Assyria to handle herself.

[96] R. Borger, *Die Inschriften Asarhaddons, Königs von Assyrien*, (*AfO*, Beiheft 9; Graz,
1956), 107–9. In the treaty, a number of the settlement terms deal with handling situ-
ations pertaining to the Phoenician ships (e.g., ll. 15–16: if a Tyrian ship is stranded in
Philistine or Assyrian-controlled territory, everything on the ship belongs to Esarhad-
don—following which is a list, ll. 18–22, of the ports subject to Assyria).

[97] Saggs, *Iraq* 17, text no. ND 2715, ll. 25–7, p. 128: "…do not sell it (timber) to
the Egyptians (or) to the Philistines," with discussion, p. 150.

that Phoenician manufactured goods did not decline as did the goods
of North Syria, and Phoenician objects moved in to fill the void left
by North Syria. This in effect, then, provides the background for the
picture drawn by Oppenheim of the Neo-Babylonian period, in which
it would appear that not only the sea routes, but also the overland and
Euphrates trade was in the hands of Phoenicians.[98] Thus one might
say that these very qualities which we observed in the respective art
works of Phoenicia and North Syria, a sense of balance, detachment
and eclecticism as opposed to one of single-minded thrust, intensity
and confrontation, clearly reflects the historical and cultural identities
of the two regions as reconstructable from contemporary documents.

In conclusion, it may be said that there are clear differences in
style, including composition and the use of space, which distinguish
Phoenician from North Syrian works, even when they are employing
similar motifs on objects of similar usage. In this regard, it should be
noted that the degree to which we may use style as an indicator of the
parent culture has not been fully explored, although it seems evident
that when neighbouring cultures share the same symbols yet choose to
represent them very differently, those differences should be culturally
significant. In the present case, it would seem that one can recognize
certain cultural traits of the respective areas of Phoenicia and North
Syria from their art-works.

The affirmable dates for Phoenician and North Syrian goods as pro-
vided by archaeological contexts strongly suggest that the North Syrian
works preceded the Phoenician, that they overlapped for a period of at
least a century, and that Phoenician production then outlived North Syr-
ian. Evidence for Phoenician production in the seventh century seems
stronger in metal-work than in ivory, although Mallowan is currently
working on the attribution of certain ivories of Phoenician style to the
reign of Esarhaddon (private communication, gratefully acknowledged).
It may be suspected that the industry did not go on unaffected by the
turmoil which political upheaval wrought. However, the point is that
there was no cessation of production as was the case in North Syria.
Should the earlier appearance of North Syrian material in the West
in fact reflect historical truth rather than accidents of archaeological
discovery, the ramifications of this should be observable in the phe-
nomena of the geometric and orientalizing periods in Greece, where

---

[98] A. L. Oppenheim, "Essay on Overland Trade in the First Millennium B.C.," *JCS*
21 (1967), 253.

one would expect to find Syrian influence prior to Phoenician.[99] Even
should Phoenician material of the ninth century B.C. become evident in
future excavations, it need not necessarily change the priority of North
Syrian goods in Greece, nor alter the fact of the earlier termination
of the Syrian group.

At present, the distribution of works divided according to stylistic
principles into Phoenician and North Syrian groups would suggest
that the two areas operated in reasonably separate spheres of contact
and influence. The possibility of a formal separation of spheres based
upon principles of economic competition, although as yet unattested
in contemporary texts, cannot be ignored. That this sort of economic
competition and restriction of trade existed during the early second
millennium B.C. is evident from Old Assyrian texts from Kültepe/
Kanesh.[100] I would venture to suggest that when one gathers the pos-
sible textual and archaeological evidence for our period as well (the
destruction of Greek installations at Al Mina level VII, and at Tarsus
by Sennacherib; the occupation by the Greeks of coastal sites to the
north of the main Phoenician cities; the division of Sicily so that the
Phoenicians occupied the western portion of the island and the Greeks
the eastern; and not least, the legend of the Phoenician sea captain who
ran his ship aground rather than be followed to Cadiz),[101] a picture will
emerge of quite sophisticated economic systems operating on principles
of competition and regulated spheres of influence. Whether this was
a conscious programme, agreed to by consenting parties, or simply a
question of jealously guarded access, is not clear. However, the pattern
of distribution of Phoenician and North Syrian goods in the early first
millennium, and particularly as they overlap in the eighth century B.C.,

[99] Both T. J. Dunbabin (*The Greeks and Their Eastern Neighbours* (London, 1957), 36–7)
and Barnett ("Oriental Influences on Archaic Greece," in S. Weinberg, ed., *The Aegean
and the Near East: Studies Presented to Hetty Goldman* (Locust Valley, New York, 1956), 235–6)
have noted that the earliest oriental imports to Greece seem to be Syrian. Although
J. N. Coldstream indicates that, "Oriental imports and local influence are rare until
well into the eighth century B.C., even in Athens," he cites the Kerameikos bowl as
possibly implying wider contact in the ninth century than is presently known (*Greek
Geometric Pottery* (London, 1968), 344). To my knowledge, the question of whether one
can trace specific North Syrian elements as preceding Phoenician in influence on
Greek art has never been systematically investigated, although the study by G. Ahlberg
("A Late Geometric Grave-Scene Influenced by North Syrian Art," *Op. Ath.* 7 (1967),
171–86) suggests that the North Syrian banquet scene of two persons seated opposite
each other at table can be traced to the Late Geometric Period, "before the main wave
from the East set in during the orientalizing Period," some 50 years later.
[100] Larsen, *The Old Assyrian City-State*, 93.
[101] Strabo, *Geography* iii.5.11.

would certainly be consistent with such a territorial division resulting, by implication, from national or regional economic competition.[102]

Finally, we have found it necessary to underscore the obvious connection between economic and political factors with the production of luxury goods such as fine ivory carving; to assert the essential relationship between a viable economy and luxury production; and, in the particular context of North Syria and Phoenicia, to see the role of Assyria as a crucial factor in the earlier termination of the North Syrian style. Thus, having begun with an investigation into the stylistic properties of two groups of related art-works, it has been possible to use the ensuing distinctions so that the finished works become documents from which aspects of their respective cultures may be reconstructed, and to see the works in the larger historical perspective of the early first millennium B.C.

---

[102] For a discussion of the economics of competition, where the desire is to raise the capital accruing to one's own region relative to others, cf. J. Friedman, "Economy and Space," *Economic Development and Cultural Change* 6 (1958), 255.

Figure 1. Nimrud: Room SW12, Fort Shalmaneser (= MMA 62.269.3).

Figure 2. Nimrud: Burnt Palace (= BM 118173).

Figure 3. Nimrud: Room SW7, Fort Shalmaneser (= BM 132691).

Figure 4. Nimrud: Room
SW7, Fort Shalmaneser (=
MMA 59.107.4).

Figure 7. Carchemish: Basalt relief,
Hilani (= Archaeological Museum,
Ankara, No. 83).

Figure 6. Carchemish: Basalt relief
frag., Great Staircase (= Archaeological
Museum, Ankara).

Figure 5. Nimrud: Room
SW37, Fort Shalmaneser (=
MMA 61.197.5).

Figure 8. Nimrud: Room S30, Fort
Shalmaneser (= IM 61882).

Figure 9. Nimrud: Room SW37, Fort
Shalmaneser (= IM 65280).

Figure 11. Damascus: Basalt relief, Omayyad
Mosque (= Musée National de Damas,
No. S.O. 30).

Figure 10. Sakçe Gözü: Basalt column base,
Palace portico (= Archaeological Museum,
Ankara, No. 10118).

Figure 12. Arslan Tash: Ivory plaque
fragment (= MMA 57.80.1).

Figure 13. Salamis: Ivory plaque, Tomb 79
(= Cyprus Museum, Nicosia).

Figure 14. El Lahun: Gold & inlay pectoral, Tomb of Sit Hathor Yunet
(= MMA 16.1.3).

Figure 15. Nimrud: Burnt Palace (= BM 118171).

Figure 16. Hasanlu: Ivory pyxis frags., Burned Building II
(= UM 65.31.400).

Figure 17. Byblos: Hammered gold pectoral, Tomb 2
(= National Museum, Beirut).

Figure 18. Enkomi: Ivory
mirror handle, Tomb 58
(= BM 97.4–1.872).

Figure 19. Enkomi: Ivory gaming board panel, Tomb 58 (= BM 97.4–1.996).

Figure 20. Nimrud: Room SW37,
Fort Shalmaneser (= IM 65360).

Figure 21. Nimrud: Room SW12,
Fort Shalmaneser (= IM 65509).

Figure 22. Nimrud: Room
SW37, Fort Shalmaneser
(= MMA 61.197.11).

Figure 23. Nimrud: Room
SE10, Fort Shalmaneser
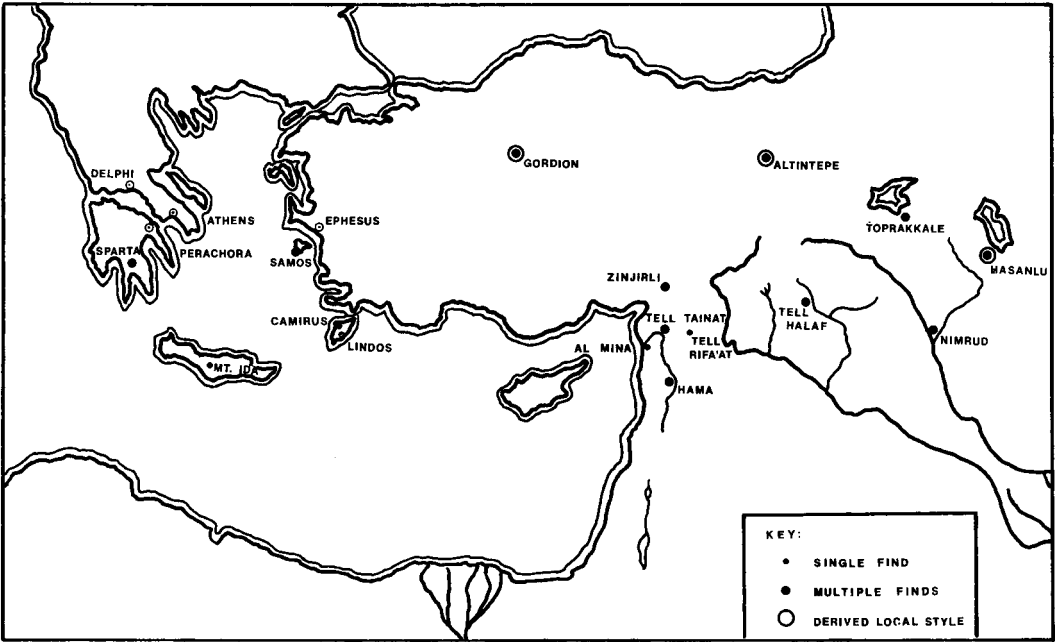(= British School of
Archaeology, Iraq).
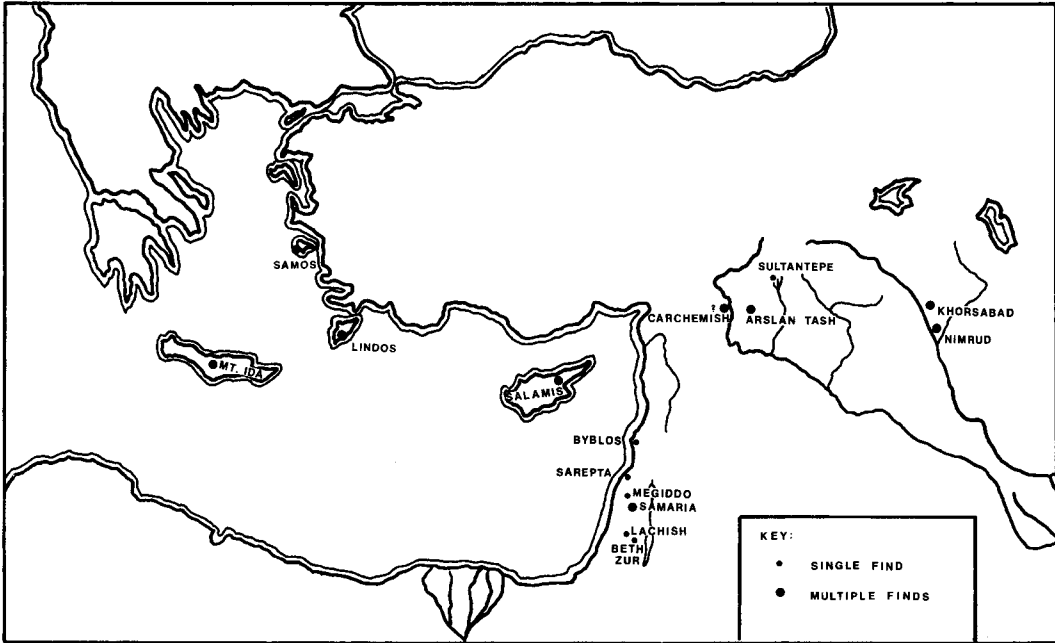
Figure 24. Distribution of North Syrian Ivory.

Figure 25. Distribution of Phoenician Ivory.

CARVED IVORY FURNITURE PANELS FROM NIMRUD:
A COHERENT SUBGROUP OF THE NORTH
SYRIAN STYLE

In the collection of The Metropolitan Museum of Art are a number of carved ivory plaques excavated at the Assyrian capital of Nimrud, and dating to the early first millennium B.C. The pieces have been acquired from the British School of Archaeology in Iraq in return for the Museum's support of renewed excavation at the site from 1949–63, under the direction of Sir Max E. L. Mallowan. Included in the group are ten plaques (for example, figs. 1, 2, 3) and two complete panels (for example, fig. 4) that belonged to a group of approximately nineteen decorated pieces of furniture stacked in Room SW7 of Fort Shalmaneser and apparently abandoned when the building was destroyed in 612 B.C.[1]

That these pieces were discovered stored in a major building in the Assyrian capital is not surprising. From the ninth through the seventh centuries B.C. there was a steady stream of ivory, both finished products and tusks, arriving in Assyria as booty and tribute from surrounding nations. This is documented in the Royal Annals from Assurnasirpal II (883–859 B.C.) to Assurbanipal (668–627 B.C.) and is also frequently depicted on reliefs, such as that of Sennacherib from Nineveh (704–681 B.C.),

---

[1] The most characteristic pieces from SW7 were published by M. Mallowan in *N&R* II, pp. 485–515. The entire collection was then presented in Mallowan and G. Herrmann, *SW7*. The works in the Metropolitan Museum are: 59.107.3 (*SW7* no. 3, ND7917); 58.31.1 (*SW7* no. 7, ND6376); 59.107.6 (*SW7* no. 8, ND7963); 59.107.7 (*SW7* no. 39, ND7925); 59.107.10 (*SW7* no. 51, ND7908, plaque 3); 59.107.4,5 (*SW7* no. 63, plaques 1, 2 ND7951); 58.31.2 (*SW7* no. 67, ND6368); 59.107.15 (*SW7* no. 87, ND7579); 59.107.8 (*SW7* no. 89, ND7930); 59.107.1 (*SW7* no. 95, ND7910); 59.107.2 (*SW7* no. 105, ND7910).

in which the king's soldiers carry off beds, chairs, footstools, and tables from a conquered citadel (fig. 5).[2]

The pieces from Room SW7 were originally called bed-heads by Mallowan; later, Mallowan and Georgina Herrmann convincingly argued that, based upon the dimensions of the complete panels and the distances between them as found in the room, they may rather have been the backs of chairs.[3] While it is clear that these more or less rectangular panels were not part of the typical couch with a C-shaped headboard such as the one Assurbanipal reclines upon in his garden scene (fig. 6) or the one represented in a camp scene on a relief of Tiglath Pileser III (744–727 B.C.),[4] we cannot definitely say that there were no beds in this period with rectangular head- or foot-boards similar to those known from Egypt and Syria in the Late Bronze Age or as found in an eighth-century tomb at Salamis.[5] However, the form that the SW7 chairs would have taken does seem to be more consistent with the high-backed chairs seen on reliefs of Tiglath Pileser, Sennacherib, and Assurbanipal, as well as on reliefs from Carchemish and Zinjirli in North Syria. In many cases these chairs, depicted in profile, clearly include decorative carved panels in the lower portions and below the armrests, so that decorated backs would also be expected.[6]

Apparently the decorated panels of SW7 were originally backed on wood, which has not been preserved. The panels average about 85 × 55 cm. in size and consist of several plaques mounted together: a center section of from four to six contiguous plaques, usually framed at top and bottom by narrow strips. The whole is then generally bound by two or three vertically arranged plaques at right and left (e.g. figs. 4, 7, 8, 9).

---

[2] For Assurnasirpal II, see Luckenbill, *AR* I, §§ 459, 475–477, 479; Shalmaneser III: *AR* I, §§ 585, 593, 625; Adad Nirari III: *AR* I, § 740; Tiglath Pileser III: *AR* I, §§ 769, 804; Sargon II: *AR* II, §§ 17, 45, 172; Sennacherib: *AR* II, §§ 240, 366; Esarhaddon: *AR* II, § 527.

[3] *SW7*, pp. 3–9.

[4] R. D. Barnett and M. Falkner, *The Sculpture of Assurnasirpal II. Tiglath Pileser III and Esarhaddon from the Central and Southwest Palaces at Nimrud* (London, 1962) pl. LX.

[5] H. Baker, *Furniture in the Ancient World* (London, 1966) figs. 83–85, 132–135 (XVIII Dynasty); C. F. A. Schaeffer, "Les fouilles de Ras-Shamra/Ugarit, 15e, 16e, 17e campagnes," *Syria* XXXI (1954) pls. viii–x; V. Karageorghis, *Excavations in the Necropolis of Salamis III* (Nicosia, 1974) pl. LXVII.

[6] See B. Hrouda, *Die Kulturgeschichte des assyrischen Flachbildes* (Bonn, 1965) pls. 14, 15. The suggestion that the SW7 panels were parts of chairs rather than beds is further supported by the slightly concave curve of the panels across their width (noted in *SW7*, p. 3), more appropriate for a backrest than a bedboard.

The notion of joining several plaques to form a panel is a logical outcome of the size of the original tusk. The practice can be observed earlier, in the Ras Shamra bed of about 1400 B.C., and continued into later times, where, for example, a throne made for the archbishop of Ravenna in the Carolingian period is comprised of a series of panels made up of five ivory plaques framed by decorated horizontal and vertical strips, all set in wood (fig. 10, from the throne skirting).

The subjects of the SW7 plaques are remarkably consistent: variations on seated or standing figures, generally grasping the tendrils of a plant. In many cases, a small winged sundisk appears at the top. On several panels, plaques of symmetrical volute trees frame the figured plaques at either side; when there are vertical frames at the sides, they are generally comprised of two or three superimposed figured plaques (as in fig. 9). The upper strip is occasionally decorated with a long winged sundisk, the bottom strip more rarely with a narrative scene.

Stylistic Affinities

An examination of the figured plaques makes it clear that this collection belongs to the North Syrian group of ivory carvings, as originally defined by F. Poulsen and R. D. Barnett in reference to the ivories discovered by F. Loftus in the Southeast, or Burnt, Palace at Nimrud in 1853. Poulsen distinguished the North Syrian from the Phoenician ivories discovered by A. H. Layard in 1848–49 in the Northwest Palace on the basis of details and motifs related to those on reliefs at Carchemish, Zinjirli, Marash, and Tell Halaf—for example, hairstyles, floral elements and trees, female sphinxes, and musicians in procession toward a seated figure—and a general absence of Egyptian elements.[7]

Poulsen's distinction was developed further by Barnett, who noted not only the absence of Egyptian features, but also the presence of Hurrian and Hittite elements inherited from the second millennium. Barnett also described the physiognomical features that characterize the style: oval face, high receding forehead, large eyes and nose, small pinched mouth, and little or no chin.[8]

---

[7] F. Poulsen, *Der Orient und die frühgriechische Bildkunst* (Leipzig, 1912) pp. 38–53.
[8] R. D. Barnett, *CNI*, pp. 40–44.

These features are closely paralleled on first-millennium objects from
North Syria (figs. 11, 12).[9] Significantly, the same conventions occur
on the SW7 plaques. The SW7 ivories also include several motifs that
can be found in Barnett's Syrian group: for example, the chariot scene
(figs. 9, 13) and the human figures holding a blossom in each hand
(figs. 2, 12, 14), in addition to the women's characteristic long garment,
vertically striated, with beaded borders, and longer at the back than at
the front (figs. 3, 4, 12). The group is, according to Poulsen's original
criterion, quite free of the Egyptian elements that are found in a typical
Phoenician-style plaque (fig. 15).

Nevertheless, there are minor differences between the SW7 and the
Loftus ivories that cannot be explained merely on the basis of dif-
ferent intended use: the Loftus collection consisting of small objects
(mirror handles, pyxides) and the SW7 panels belonging to furniture.
These differences include variations in male and female hairstyles and
in men's garments, all of which, although paralleled in Assyrian and
North Syrian reliefs, are not to be found among the Loftus ivories. In
addition, SW7 plant forms, particularly trees, tend to be extremely
curvilinear; human limbs are often awkwardly articulated, and the
figures are generally larger in scale, crowding the plaques (figs. 4, 7,
8). All of these qualities are consistently exhibited within the SW7
group, and suggest that the SW7 ivories form a coherent subgroup of
the North Syrian style.

It is therefore significant that of all the similarities that can be cited
between the ivories of SW7 and the fixed monuments of North Syria,
the parallels cluster around two sites within twenty kilometers of each
other: Zinjirli and Sakçe Gözü.[10]

Closely comparable are the plaques representing seated women
(figs. 8, 16) and a stela carved with the same subject of the time of
Bar Rakib (about 740–725 B.C.), found outside Hilani I at Zinjirli
(figs. 17).[11] The stela bears a winged sundisk in the upper field, as

---

[9] Compare the reliefs from Tell Halaf, Carchemish, and Zinjirli in Orthmann,
USK, pls. 8–11, 15–19, 56–59, and the Zinjirli silver plaques in von Luschan, *AiS* V, p
s. 46k, 47d. The relationship between these plaques from Zinjirli and the Syrian-style
ivories was noted by O. W. Muscarella, "Hasanlu, 1964," *The Metropolitan Museum of
Art Bulletin* 25 (1966) figs. 5, 6.

[10] The complete range of parallels in theme and details between the SW7 ivories and
material from other North Syrian and Assyrian sites is presented in *SW7*, pp. 19–35,
39–61. I shall discuss only those parallels with works from Zinjirli and Sakçe Gözü.

[11] See also *SW7*, p. 33 and nos. 46:2, 3; 47–50.

do a number of plaques from SW7. The SW7 women all sit on square stools, feet resting on footstools. On some plaques they grasp the tendrils of plants before them with one hand, holding an object in the other; generally, however, they reach toward a small table set in the branches of a flowering tree. The tables are cross-legged, terminating in bull's feet; they are invariably piled high with dishes and layers of bread. The arrangement of food on the tables, even to the inclusion of a low, footed bowl, is also seen on the table before the seated woman of the Zinjirli stela; the tables' shape, crossed legs, and vertical support piece are likewise similar. The fleecy tasseled cloth that covers the Zinjirli chair and the shaped footstool are also depicted on the ivories, and the single lotus blossom with short curvilinear stem, held by the Zinjirli woman in her left hand, is likewise paralleled on one of the plaques.[12]

A scene similar to that of the ivories and the Zinjirli stela is repeated on a silver plaque from Zinjirli (fig. 11). Another closely related representation is found on a badly weathered relief found near the base of the mound of Sakçe Gözü, where a similar table in a banquet scene is outfitted with food and a low, footed bowl.[13] Unfortunately, it is not possible to determine what sort of garment the seated figure is wearing, although the chair seems identical in shape to that of the stela, and to the sort of chair the SW7 panels probably once adorned. The figure, seated to the right, reaches out with the right arm toward the footed bowl, as does one of the women on the SW7 plaques (fig. 16).

All of the women on the SW7 ivories have the same hairstyle: three or four long corkscrew curls down the back of the head behind the ear, with one long curl falling in front of the ear, and short curls on the brow. It is a style of men's and women's coiffure that is typical of reliefs and sculpture from Zinjirli and Sakçe Gözü of the period of Bar Rakib—for example, on the female sphinx orthostat from Hilani II at Zinjirli and on the male sphinx relief from Sakçe Gözü (fig. 18).[14]

Seated male figures are rare in the SW7 assemblage. When they do occur, they are without the small table and generally reach into the branches of a tree. However, on two plaques, the cushioned chair has a

---

[12] For the trellis-fringe tassels, see *SW7*, no. 46:2 (my fig. 8) and p. 33; for the footstool, *SW7*, no. 47 (my fig. 16); for the lotus blossom, *SW7*, no. 48.

[13] J. Garstang, "Excavations at Sakçe Geuzi in North Syria: Preliminary Report for 1908," *LAAA* I (1908) pl. xxxv:1.

[14] *USK*, pls. 64b, 51b. Note especially the identical single curl in front of the ear and the four behind in 51b.

high, angled back like that of the Zinjirli and Sakçe Gözü examples,[15] and on a third plaque we see again the same footstool.[16]

On the central plaque of a complete panel (fig. 7), a male figure is seated on a cross-legged stool that ends in bull's feet, like the table in fig. 16. The male figure rests his feet on the backs of two bulls that form his footstool. As discussed below, the use of bulls in this context may be a reference to the identity of the seated figure. This is the only example of a seated figure holding a raised bowl or cup, as on the Zinjirli stela. It can be compared as well with a fragment of a relief of Bar Rakib himself, also from Zinjirli, on which the king also holds an open bowl in his outstretched hand.[17]

The seated figure of the ivory panel is flanked by two plaques on each side depicting winged griffin-demons holding lustral cones and buckets, and "heros" with small animals over their shoulders, all facing the center. The griffins' open beaks with extended tongues, hair and topcurls, and downward curving short wings are most closely paralleled by the griffin-demons on the palace orthostats at Sakçe Gözü (fig. 19).[18] The tradition of carrying an animal over the shoulder occurs on ninth-century reliefs at Carchemish, in the procession of male figures on the King's Gate, and on one of the orthostats of the Citadel Gate at Zinjirli.[19] An even closer parallel is to be found on the orthostat from Bar Rakib's Nordhallenbau at Zinjirli, where despite differences

---

[15] *SW7*, no. 51:1, 51:4.

[16] *SW7*, no. 52.

[17] *USK*, pl. 67d.

[18] Similarities in stance, position of the upper hand holding the cone, and proportion of the figures outweigh differences in dress or the fact that the Sakçe Gözü griffin-demons have four wings. It is significant that in both cases the wings are shown both raised and lowered. There are examples within the SW7 group of four-winged creatures, for example, *SW7*, nos. 3, 67, and 68, which depicts a male genius wearing a short kilt. Similar griffin-genii are also depicted on a pair of à-jour plaques from the temple of Haldi at Altintepe and from Toprak Kale, in Urartu (see T. Özgüç, *Altintepe II* [Ankara, 1969] pl. xxxii and *CNI*, W.13). They share with the Sakçe Gözü reliefs and the SW7 ivories the same hair and forehead curls, distinctively curving wings, and open beak; the Toprak Kale griffins wear a tunic beneath a long belted skirt identical to that worn in *SW7*, no. 25. Considering the closeness of the Urartean works to those from SW7 and Sakçe Gözü, and the close political ties between North Syria and Urartu through the first half of the eighth century B.C., I would suggest that the stimulus for the Urartean ivories, or possibly the ivories themselves, came from North Syria. Evidence for this from various contemporary sources is gathered in my unpublished doctoral dissertation, "North Syria in the Early First Millennium B.C., with special reference to Ivory Carving" (Columbia University, 1973) pp. 125–130.

[19] C. L. Woolley and T. E. Lawrence, *Carchemish* II (London, 1921) pls. B.22b–B.24; *AiS* III, pl. xxxvii: upper right; *USK*, pls. 30e–h, 57b.

in the proportions of the figures, a virtually identical gazelle with curved horn is carried on the shoulders of one of the king's attendants (fig. 20).[20]

The hero's distinctive hairstyle—three rows of large spiral curls—can best be compared to that of one of the lion-slayers on the hunt relief of the Sakçe Gözü palace enclosure (fig. 21).[21] The overgarment worn by the animal bearer from SW7 superficially resembles both the long coat of Assyrian armor that is represented as horizontal rows of rounded lappets to indicate metal scales,[22] and the cut-away garment obviously modeled on the Assyrian, worn by the second lion-slayer of the Sakçe Gözü hunt relief. However, G. Herrmann has convincingly argued that the animal bearer's overgarment is rather made of a woolly, looped fabric.[23]

Indeed, the general form of every garment represented on the Sakçe Gözü hunt relief is duplicated on the SW7 plaques: the belted, open skirt of the spearman comparable to those on a number of plaques

---

[20] *AiS* IV, pl. 63; *USK*, pl. 64c. It is not significant that the gazelle's head on the Zinjirli relief is not turned while that of the SW7 plaque is. On the reliefs of the King's Gate at Carchemish, the heads of animals carried by male figures in procession all vary in position. The turn of the head is therefore not necessarily a criterion of style or date.

[21] A similar hairstyle, although with tighter curls and some times long hair at the nape of the neck, is worn by the children of Araras on reliefs of the King's Buttress at Carchemish (D. G. Hogarth, *Carchemish* I [London, 1914] pl. B.7; *USK*, pl. 31f.). In all cases, the individuals who wear their hair in this manner are beardless, and at Carchemish they are definitely children. This may therefore be a convention for representing youth—in this case, the youthful hunter/hero. I believe it is a phenomenon distinct from the "Gilgamesh" hero often shown on Assyrian reliefs—for example at Khorsabad—where the figure is represented frontally, with hair arranged in large spiral curls to the shoulders, and whose antecedents go back to Akkadian cylinder seals (T. A. W. Madhloom, *The Chronology of Neo-Assyrian Art* [London, 1970] p. 86).

[22] Seen on reliefs: Barnett and Falkner, *Sculpture*, pls. LXVII, CXXII; actual pieces of iron scale armor were uncovered by Mallowan in Fort Shalmaneser (*N&R* II, p. 490, fig. 336). Such scale armor was also used for horses (W. Lambert, "Sultantepe Tablets VIII: Shalmaneser in Ararat," *Anat. Stud.* 11 [1961] pp. 150–151); however, as both wool and armor are appropriate materials for horse coverings, it is not possible to conclusively identify this looped or lappet pattern on the SW7 ivories.

[23] *SW7*, pp. 23–24. This seems especially clear in the similar garment worn by men in the flowerpot helmet series of ivories, in which the lappets and loops are very much like the border of the garment (figs. 2, 14, 24). These loops can also be observed at the border of the cloak of Bar Rakib, which was surely of fabric, not metal, as depicted on a relief from Zinjirli (*AiS* IV, pl. LXVII; *USK*, pl. 66c). G. Herrmann in *SW7* does reserve the possibility that one of the representations (no. 21) may actually indicate armor, however, as the lappets are so clearly visible.

that show men with buckets grasping branches of the tree;[24] the short
kilt with a diagonal flap from which tassels fall between the legs, which
is also worn by four male figures on a complete panel;[25] and the belted
wraparound coats of the men in the chariot worn also by two of the
figures in the chariot of the SW7 hunt scene (fig. 22).

This hunt scene occurs on a horizontal plaque that makes up the
base of one of the complete panels (fig. 9), and shows four men in a
chariot chasing two bulls before them and attacking a bull to the rear
of the chariot. The prancing horses wear blankets and medallionlike
tasseled ornaments at the shoulder. The chariot is hitched by a yoke
and an elliptical draft-pole decorated with panels of rosettes. The six-
spoked wheel of the chariot is set toward the rear of the chariot box.

The driver and a bowman about to shoot wear the wraparound
woolly coat; they and a third, partially hidden, figure face the two bulls
ahead. Details of the archer's gear are carefully delineated. He wears
a leather wrist guard on the left hand and a finger guard on the right
hand, which pulls back the bowstring. The only other representation I
know of on which these features have been so scrupulously recorded
is one of the reliefs of Bar Rakib from the Nordhallenbau at Zinjirli
(fig. 23). There, the walking archer has his bow slung over the left
shoulder, while he carries two arrows in his right hand and the finger
and wrist guards in his left.[26]

A fourth figure in the chariot, wearing a long garment with a fringed
shawl over one shoulder, leans out over the back of the chariot to spear
a bull behind. The bull, collapsing on one knee, is as large as the entire
chariot complex before him. The other two bulls are also enormous
and press against the upper and lower borders of the plaque.

The similarity between this hunt plaque and the hunt relief from
Sakçe Gözü has been pointed out by a number of scholars.[27] The winged
sundisk above the chariot of the relief is identical to the sundisks in the
upper plaques of the hunt panel: in both, the disk has a beaded border,
pendant volutes on either side and a fan of tail feathers between. The
volute curls spring directly from the curving shoulders of the wings,

---

[24] *SW7*, nos. 23, 24.
[25] *SW7*, no. 65.
[26] Also noted in *SW7*, p. 69.
[27] For example, *N&R* II, p. 490; D. Ussishkin, "On the Date of a Group of Ivories
from Nimrud," *BASOR* 203 (1971) pp. 22–27.

while two registers of wing feathers extend to either side.[28] The horses of both the ivory plaque and the relief are in the same posture and wear the same paraphernalia; the chariots are similarly shaped and appointed, with the same draft-pole; and the four rosettes on the pole of the plaque may be comparable to the four rosettes in the field of the relief. The only major difference is that the chariot wheel has eight spokes on the relief, and only six on the ivory.

On the relief, the hunted lion is attacked by two figures on foot. However, the diagonal thrust of the spear held by both hands of the hunter on the right of the relief is very similar to that of the spear of the hunter on the ivory. The most extraordinary similarity in the two representations is in the disproportionately large size of the hunted animals.

The other plaques that accompany the SW7 hunt scene in fig. 9 include a winged female genius in the center and eight male figures in short tunics with open coats who grasp the curving branches of a flowering tree. This last theme is by far the most common of the representations in the SW7 group. On the vertical side plaques, the men stand on several rows of a scale pattern—a common convention for rendering earth or ground since Early Dynastic and Akkadian times in Mesopotamia.[29] The particular pose of reaching toward the plants with the arm extended to eye level or above finds its closest parallel on a bone tube carved in Syrian style from the Loftus collection.[30] It may also be compared to an orthostat from the palace facade at Sakçe Gözü, where two men, shown with both a winged disk and a plant, reach upward to grasp the bud issuing from a curving tendril (fig. 19).

The standard tree in the SW7 collection consists of a long, undulating stem from the shoots of which issue different types of flowers. The figures on the plaques either grasp one or two of the plant's tendrils

---

[28] This is in distinction to the winged disk as represented in Assyrian glyptic (E. Porada, *Corpus of Near Eastern Seals in North American Collections I: The Collection of the Pierpont Morgan Library* [Washington, D.C., 1948] nos. 640–646, 648–650), in which the curls are replaced by a short curlicue that appears just above the sun while the tail feathers sometimes turn at either end into volutes with tendrils extending down from the disk. It is also distinct from the winged disk on Phoenician-style works (*CNI*, S. 146), where the disk is generally flanked by uraei. Thus the curls and clearly defined shoulders serve to mark the North Syrian style in the early first millennium B.C. (see I. Winter, "Phoenician and North Syrian Ivory Carving in Historical Context: Questions of Style and Distribution," *Iraq* 38 [1976] pp. 4–6).

[29] H. Frankfort, *Cylinder Seals* (London, 1939) pls. XVII: c, h; XVIII: a, g, j, k; XIX: a, c.

[30] *CNI*, S. 69.

or reach toward the flowers. The motif of a man with a tree occurs from earliest times in the art of the Near East, and need not be documented here. The rounding of forms and the exaggerated curves are characteristic of the North Syrian style.[31] However, the particular kind of coiling "tendril" tree is unique. The only close parallels to our trees are the papyrus plants with twined stalks that flank a frontally posed man in a long dress on an ivory from Arslan Tash, and the even more tightly twined tendrils twisted around a central stalk on an ivory in the Loftus collection.[32] On neither of these, however, do the tendrils curve out beyond the main trunk as they do on the SW7 plaques.

One of the flowers that grows on the trees is a leafy cluster that resembles the palmette plants of Phoenician ivories, yet omits the symmetric volutes at the stem juncture that are always indicated on Phoenician examples (compare figs. 1 and 15). This simple palmette has an antecedent in the trees from the Investiture mural at Mari, dated to the early second millennium,[33] and is found also on a basalt relief from the Bit Hilani at Carchemish, showing a bullman grasping the long stem of a palmette plant very much like ours.[34] On this basis, I have suggested it as a criterion for the North Syrian style. These leafy palmette clusters are often combined on the same panel with other flowers that are represented either as two outcurving petals with a central round bulb, or as several outcurving pointed petals (fig. 9). On a few occasions, all three types issue from the same tree (fig. 8), while on one complete panel, the three vertical side plaques each bear a tree with a different one of the three types of flower.[35]

Within the SW7 group, a distinctive series of plaques depicts men wearing odd flowerpot helmets and corkscrew curl hairstyles. Of these, several show men grasping the tendrils of the typical tree (for example, figs. 2, 14), while others represent two identical figures standing side by side, holding hands (for example, fig. 24).[36] These distinctive pieces include a register above the human figures in which a winged siren, holding a blossom in each outstretched hand, appears in the

[31] D. Opitz and A. Moortgat, *Tell Halaf* III (Berlin, 1955) pl. 94a; *CNI*, S. 145, S. 47, S. 69; *AiS V*, pl. 46k.

[32] F. Thureau-Dangin et al., *Arslan Tash Atlas* (Paris, 1931) pl. xxxiii: 43; *CNI*, S. 3.

[33] A. Parrot, *Sumer* (New York, 1959) fig. 346.

[34] C. L. Woolley and R. D. Barnett, *Carchemish* III (London, 1952) pl. B.49a; *USK*, pl. 35d.

[35] *SW7*, no. 46, plaques 1, 4 (my fig. 8); no. 2, plaques 1–3.

[36] *SW7*, nos. 38, 39, 40, 42, 43, 44.

place of the sundisk. The plaques also include lower registers in which a couchant female sphinx or lion and sometimes a stylized floral element are represented.

The garments of these male figures have already been discussed in regard to the woolly coat that resembles armor. The only concrete parallel for the composite form of the flowerpot helmet is to be found on a ninth-century orthostat from the Citadel Gate at Zinjirli (fig. 25), although it is possible that one of the female heads in the round and a female sphinx carved in relief from the Nimrud ivories wear similar headdresses.[37]

The hair of these figures is rendered differently from that of the rest of the SW7 group: three long corkscrew curls down the back of the neck and similar curls in the beard. It is a hairstyle known from several North Syrian reliefs of the eighth century B.C., associated by Akurgal with the "Aramaean" style.[38] It can be seen on the orthostats of the two men opposite a tree (fig. 19) or the two male sphinxes (fig. 18) from the palace at Sakçe Gözü, as well as on reliefs from both the Nordhallenbau of Bar Rakib[39] and Hilani III (fig. 26) at Zinjirli. The Nordhallenbau reliefs—both in the king's own beard curls and in the ringlets of his attendant musicians, with their tightly coiled spiral corkscrews ending in open curls—are closest to the treatment of curls on the ivories, while the attendant figure from Hilani III provides a good parallel to the way that the curls curve up rather than simply hang straight down at the nape of the neck. The same sort of long curls billowing out in the back and long beard curls are carefully represented on Syrian captives being subdued by soldiers of Tiglath Pileser III in his wall paintings from Til Barsib,[40] and on foreign mercenaries in one of the king's battle reliefs from Nimrud (fig. 27); it is a style distinct from the Assyrians' own coiffure.

The winged female figures that appear in the upper registers are most unusual (fig. 28). Their faces are broad and round, typical of Syrian female representations, as on the female sphinx column bases of Zinjirli and Sakçe Gözü (e.g. fig. 29). The proportions of outspread wings and tail feathers to head bear striking resemblance to the bronze siren cauldron attachments that have been attributed to North Syrian

---

[37] *N&R* II, fig. 499, from room SE1, Fort Shalmaneser; fig. 525, from room SW37.

[38] E. Akurgal, *The Art of Greece: Its Origins* (New York, 1968) p. 53.

[39] *AiS* V, pls. 60, 62.

[40] F. Thureau-Dangin, *Til Barsib Atlas* (Paris, 1936) pl. XXIV.

manufacture (fig. 30).[41] In this case, the human attributes are placed directly above the standard winged disk, so that the disk becomes the creature's breast, and she is seen as if flying head-on. Placement of these sirens in the same position on the ivory plaques as that occupied by the simple sundisk suggests a connection in meaning as well. Similarly, the couchant sphinxes and lions in the lower registers can be compared to the sphinxes that occupy the space below the chairs of seated figures on other SW7 plaques.

Workshops

Clearly, all of the SW7 plaques contain related scenes or elements. At the same time, in composition as well as in execution, the flowerpot helmet series seems to constitute a separate unit within the collection, suggesting that it was conceived and executed apart from the rest. Criteria for individual workshops have been put forth in the recent publication of SW7.[42] Distinctions drawn indicate that within a single workshop, different plaques of the same panel may have been done by different hands, and therefore that a workshop contained several artisans.[43] One principal workshop is distinguished, whose work consists of the majority of pieces, including the hunt panel (fig. 9). The seated man and griffins panel (fig. 7), the flowerpot helmet group (figs. 2, 14, 24), a panel that shows men actually standing in the branches of the tree,[44] and another panel on which kilted men and long-robed women stand upon a composite floral winged disk with rosette center,[45] are considered the products of different workshops. Evidence for this is convincing, as each of the subgroups includes features that differ in rendering and in conception from those of the main group.

Nevertheless, as each of these subdivisions still maintains its closest parallels with the eighth-century reliefs of Zinjirli and Sakçe Gözü, it does not seem necessary, as argued in the publication, to ascribe

---

[41] O. W. Muscarella, "The Oriental Origin of Siren Cauldron Attachments," *Hesperia* XXXI (1962) pp. 317–329; H.-V. Herrmann, *Die Kessel der orientalisierende Zeit* (Berlin, 1966) pp. 64–67. For a discussion of the blossoms held by the sirens on the ivory plaques, see below.

[42] *SW7*, pp. 35–39.

[43] *SW7*, no. 3 and p. 73.

[44] *SW7*, no. 21.

[45] *SW7*, no. 65.

to these workshops differences either in time or place. Once the raw material was available in an area, it is possible that a single center could support a number of coexisting workshops,[46] all of which could demonstrate a range, not only in the quality of workmanship but also in style, from archaistic to "modern" and including the rare, innovative, or unique piece.[47]

A similar case can be observed in the reliefs of the Nordhallenbau at Zinjirli. There is a clear difference in proportion, attention to detail, and overall quality in the relief of the seated Bar Rakib and his scribe, the musicians, and the attendants with jug and archer's gear (see fig. 23)[48] from the other attendant figures characterized by the short and squat gazelle bearer depicted in fig. 20. Apparently, at least two sculptors worked on the orthostats for the building, the more competent working on the more prestigious royal slab and its adjacent blocks. A similar situation pertained in the carving of the Parthenon metopes in fifth-century Athens, where different sculptors executed individual slabs, which then reflected varying degrees of expertise and ranged greatly in style from archaic to classical.[49]

Analysis and Interpretation of Decorative Scheme

That the SW7 panels were all conceived as part of a single "program" is equally clear when one examines their content. For, whatever the stylistic

---

[46] As, for example, in Old Babylonian Sippar, where there were apparently rows of contiguous goldsmiths' shops (A. L. Oppenheim, "Trade in the Ancient Near East," *V International Congress of Economic History, Leningrad, 10–14 August 1970* [Moscow, 1970] p. 18, note 46).

[47] As far as quality is concerned, despite the same motif of men grasping trees, note the sharp contrast between the awkward, columnar figures of *SW7*, nos. 64:1–4, with their sticklike arms, and the well-proportioned and modeled figures of nos. 65–66. More subtle distinctions in quality can be made among closely related plaques such as *SW7*, nos. 2, 4, 5, 19, 21, 26, 38, 40, 46, in all of which a figure grasps the tendril or branch of a tree. In the more successful examples, the stalk bends just below the hand, suggesting the weight and pull of the figure's arms, whereas in less successful ones, the curves are arbitrary.

[48] *AiS* IV, pls. 60–62, figs. 257, 259; *USK*, pls. 63b–d, f–h; 64a.

[49] F. Brommer (*Die Metopen des Parthenon* [Mainz, 1967] p. 174) speaks of a period at the most of eight years, possibly only five, and quotes C. Picard to the effect that if all of the metopes had been found in isolated instances, the range would have been extended over thirty years, from about 460 to 430 B.C., rather than from 447 to 439 at most.

variation in individual works, the theme of a seated or standing figure
with a tree and some form of the winged disk remains constant.

When one looks at the collection as a whole, it is possible to come
a bit closer to defining the underlying program. None of the human
figures wears the headgear that would immediately identify a deity.[50]
Yet traditionally, the seated position is reserved for divine or highly
prestigious personages.[51] Significantly, when there is a single seated
figure or a pair in a panel, they occupy the central plaque or plaques.
Furthermore, the pair of bulls that compose the footstool of the seated
male on the griffin panel (fig. 7) are precisely the animals associated
with the Syrian storm god from the Hittite Empire through the Roman
period.[52] Finally, at least one of the seated women (fig. 8) holds in her
outstretched hand a large ring similar to that held by a seated female
goddess on a relief of Tiglath Pileser III from the Central Palace at
Nimrud (fig. 31).[53] The same ring is held by a seated figure of Ishtar
in the procession of gods from Sennacherib's rock relief at Maltai, as
well as in the upper portion of the stela of Esarhaddon (680–669 B.C.)
found at Zinjirli.[54]

At Maltai, all of the male gods hold both a ring and a staff; female
deities hold the ring alone. On both the Maltai and Esarhaddon reliefs,
Ishtar is the only seated figure. Her chair is straight-backed, without
arms, and its lower portions are decorated with mythological figures.
The shape of the chair is not unlike some of the chairs represented
on the SW7 plaques[55] and is also similar to the sort of chair we would
expect the SW7 panels to have decorated. In addition, as was previ-
ously mentioned, a number of chairs and stools depicted on the SW7
ivories include winged sphinxes between the legs of the chairs, while a
single example contains a complex floral arrangement of lotus blossoms
similar to those in the tree before the seated figure.[56] The association

---

[50] As, for example, the headdresses worn by divine figures on ninth-century reliefs
from Zinjirli and Carchemish, and by male sphinxes of the Sakçe Gözü palace (*USK*,
pls. 23a, b; 50c; 53c; 58d, f).
[51] Frankfort, *Cylinder Seals*, pls. XIV: e, f; XX: b, j; XXIV: f (Akkadian); XXV: d, e, i (Ur
III); XXVI: k; XXVII: a, b, g (Old Babylonian); XXX: k, 1 (Kassite).
[52] O. R. Gurney, *The Hittites* (London, 1952) p. 141; J. Garstang, *The Hittite Empire*
(London, 1929) p. 304, fig. 42.
[53] Barnett and Falkner, *Sculpture*, pls. XCII, XCIII.
[54] Hrouda, *Kulturgeschichte*, pl. 40:1; *AiS* 1, pl. 1, fig. 4.
[55] *SW7*, no. 51.
[56] *SW7*, nos. 41, 48, 50, 49.

of Mesopotamian Ishtar and the West Semitic goddess Astarte with the female sphinx has been clearly demonstrated.[57] The lion, which replaces the sphinx on some of the plaques in the flowerpot helmet group, is also associated with Astarte; on equestrian bridle ornaments, the goddess often stands on lions or lions' heads, as does the Ishtar figure from the procession at Maltai.[58] The spindles held by a seated female on one of the plaques is often associated with Astarte's classical counterpart, Aphrodite/Venus, although the spindle is also an attribute of Anath in second-millennium texts from Ugarit.[59] The walking genius figures are clearly raised to a "mythological" place by the addition of wings, while the wingless figures on one of the complete panels hold short, curved batons often held by the gods, as on a relief from Assur.[60] Thus, although it is not certain that any of the figures on the SW7 plaques represent gods or goddesses, their attributes seem to associate them with the divine.

Some sort of plant form occurs in each of the figured plaques. The importance of the plant elements is indicated on the plaques where there are two men alone (for example, fig. 24), as a separate register is provided at the bottom in which an individual floral volute is depicted.

---

[57] *CNI*, p. 85, note 1; E. Porada, "Review of Barnett, *Catalogue of Nimrud Ivories*," *AJA* 64 (1959) p. 93.

[58] *SW7*, no. 51:1. The association of the goddess with lions is discussed in H. J. Kantor, "A Bronze Plaque with Relief Design from Tell Tainat," *JNES* 21 (1962) pp. 93–117, esp. pp. 100–101. Again, this association continues in Syria into Roman times (see Garstang, *Hittite Empire*, pp. 302–305).

[59] See *SW7*, no. 51:2, and *CML*, Baal II ii and 3 and p. 15. In this context, Mallowan has discussed at length two possible interpretations of the "banquet scene," which he associated with the laden tables depicted on several SW7 plaques with seated women. I do not feel we are provided with enough evidence here to associate this particular scene with either funerary repasts or victory celebrations (*SW7*, pp. 11–16), but we must recognize the many situations in which such "meals" play a significant role. In addition to the situations cited by Mallowan, there is the "sacred marriage" (S. N. Kramer, *The Sacred Marriage Rite* [Bloomington, 1969] p. 79), seduction scenes in general, such as when Ishtar wrests a number of attributes from Enlil at Eridu (S. N. Kramer, *Sumerian Mythology* [Philadelphia, 1961] pp. 65–68), and offering scenes, such as food provided for the gods (A. L. Oppenheim, *Letters from Mesopotamia* [Chicago, 1967] no. 144). In all cases, the laden table had a positive significance. The unifying principle might be described as reflecting the abundance that results from a good relationship with the land, and hence with the gods; however in isolated instances it is not always possible to reconstruct to which specific narrative an individual representation refers.

[60] *SW7*, no. 65, as compared with Madhloom, *Chronology*, pl. LX:4. The men on the panel also hold curved batons that may be paralleled by objects held by divine figures elsewhere.

Several plaques also have lower registers that contain bud and lotus or plant elements (for example, figs. 1, 8). In general, the figures reach toward or grasp the curving branches of a tree. On one panel, the figures actually stand in the branches, while on several plaques, the trees spring from a schematic representation of earth, indicated by a pattern of overlapping scales.[61]

The role of the "sacred tree" in the tradition of the ancient Near East is well established.[62] Neo-Assyrian texts from our period refer to the close association between the fertility of the land and care for the "sacred tree."[63] On those SW7 plaques that contain a tree alone, the basis for the complex voluted plant is the palm tree, provider of important staples of life in arid climates.[64] The two most frequent blossoms on the plaques are the abbreviation of the tree—the palmette—and the lily or lotus. The lotus is most often depicted as a single blossom. It appears held, on a short stem, in addition to growing on trees, and is occasionally shown as part of an alternating chain of buds and flowers.

One may wonder why the lotus plant is singled out and why it appears in the bud and blossom chain. The pattern is often taken simply as an ornament, or else as a representation of two stages in the life cycle: birth (bud) and maturity (flower). However, I would submit that the choice of this particular plant is an explicit reference to the fact that the most commonly represented type, the *Caerulea*, or blue lotus, opens and closes daily, flowering from sunrise to midday,[65] and hence is a constant reminder of regeneration. Thus, the bud and lotus do not represent specific stages in the plant's life, so much as its daily renewal. Its connection with the sun is clear as well, as the blue lotus bud opens precisely at dawn and closes at midday, when the sun is most destructive.[66] On the ivories, these symbols of regeneration and life cycles are

---

[61] *SW7*, nos. 38, 39.

[62] H. Danthine, *Le palmier-dattier et les arbres sacrés dans l'iconographie de l'asie occidentale ancienne* (Paris, 1938); G. Widengren, *The King and the Tree of Life in Ancient Near Eastern Religion* (Uppsala, 1951).

[63] *CNI*, p. 89.

[64] *SW7*, nos. 2:4, 9; 21:1, 6; 22:1, 6; 89–94. See Oppenheim, *Ancient Mesopotamia*, p. 312, with regard to the date palm's ability to withstand the brackish water and salinated soil characteristic of southern Mesopotamia, and the date's value as a staple of the ancient diet.

[65] G. A. D. Tait, "The Egyptian Relief Chalice," *JEA* 49 (1963) p. 96.

[66] The bud and lotus therefore is an appropriate symbol for funerary monuments. Tait ("The Egyptian Relief Chalice," p. 99) notes that the Egyptian *Caerulea* chalice is frequently shown in the ritual of the dead, and not in ordinary banquet scenes,

quite consistent with the presence of sacred trees and deities, as well as with the sundisk, discussed below.[67]

Although the rosette does not occur frequently on the SW7 ivories, there is one notable instance where the rosette fills the center of a floral sundisk placed at the bottom rather than at the top of the plaques in a complete panel.[68] In addition, four rosettes appear on the draft-pole of the chariot on the hunt panel (fig. 22), which, as noted above, may be comparable to the presence of four rosettes in the field of the Sakçe Gözü hunt relief (fig. 21). The association of the rosette with the Mesopotamian goddess Ishtar and with the Syrian mother-goddess Kubaba is clear. It appears atop the headdress of the seated Ishtar on the relief of Tiglath Pileser III from Nimrud (fig. 31) and on Kubaba's polos and robe in reliefs from Zinjirli and Carchemish.[69]

As with the lotus, the significance of this particular plant becomes evident once one observes the rosette in nature. Plants that grow with radiating leaves lying close to the ground (called basal leaves, or rosettes) are among the hardiest of the plant kingdom, living in conditions unsuitable for most plants, resisting weather changes, and reproducing rapidly.[70] Thus the rosette, like the bud and lotus, represents that which endures and generates, and, if the botanical analogy is well taken, is an appropriate symbol for goddesses associated with fertility.

The presence of rosettes on the Sakçe Gözü relief and on the SW7 chariot supports the suggestion that the disproportionately large size of the hunted animals reflects a significance beyond that of a secular hunt. Contemporary kings of Assyria are shown participating in royal

---

although he does not explicitly connect the Egyptian concern for the afterlife to that particular blossom.

[67] E. R. Goodenough (*Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period*, IV [Princeton, 1954] pp. 25–43) distinguishes between "live symbols," charged with meaning, as opposed to decoration. In the ancient Near East, the repetition of symbols, even of a decorative nature, served to intensify a situation and even to heighten the drama, as can be seen so clearly in literary compositions. Repetition further implies continuity, precisely by not showing the unique, but rather by exemplifying principles which repeat and endure. In this case, then, the bud and lotus, and particularly the bud and lotus chain, would be a "live" symbol, the pattern synonymous with the recurrent principle it embodies.

[68] *SW7*, no. 65. Note that this occurs also on the sundisk of the Zinjirli seated woman stele (fig. 17).

[69] M. Riemschneider. *Die Welt der Hethiter* (Stuttgart, 1954) pl. 48; *USK*, pl. 58c; Woolley and Barnett, *Carchemish* III, pls. B.39a, 64. For the rosette's association with Inanna/Ishtar, see M.-T. Barrellet, "Les déesses ailées et armées," *Syria* XXXII (1955) p. 244.

[70] E. L. Palmer, "Basal Rosettes," *Natural History* (November, 1960) pp. 36–45.

hunts as part of their iconography of power and success; the reliefs prominently displayed in the palace.[71] The hunt relief from Sakçe Gözü was also highly visible, reconstructed by Ussishkin as one of a pair set on either side of the gateway to the palace enclosure. Even if we cannot identify the figures in the chariot or the precise significance of the scene,[72] we can perceive that it is nonetheless culturally charged and that the implied power, prowess, and capacity to perform are related to the same cultural concerns as providing fertility for the land.

We come then to the role of the winged sundisk and siren figures within this context. On the relief of two men opposite a tree from the palace facade at Sakçe Gözü (fig. 19), tendrils ending in lotus flowers actually extend down from the sundisk to be grasped by the figures below. This is also common on Neo-Assyrian cylinder seals.[73] On the SW7 ivories, the disks do not have pendant blossoms, but consistently appear in the field above figures who grasp tendrillike branches or flowers on a tree. On one panel, every plaque contains a winged disk in addition to the large winged disk portrayed on a horizontal plaque that extends across the entire panel (fig. 9). In the flowerpot helmet group, the disk takes the form of a female siren holding blossoms (fig. 28); on another panel, the disk appears in an unusual floral configuration.[74] Since the association of the griffin and the sun is attested in classical sources and has been suggested also in the ancient Near East,[75] it is possible that the griffin-demon guardians of the tree on the seated man panel (fig. 7) may be standing in for the sun's presence. If this is so, then this panel, which is attributed to a different workshop from most of the SW7 pieces, might well represent a rare, not necessarily innovative, but independent solution to a problem, where the ancient

---

[71] See Assyrian kings hunting in *AR*, passim, discussed for reliefs in H. Frankfort, *Art and Architecture of the Ancient Orient* (Baltimore, 1954) pp. 99–101. Two reliefs with divine symbols on the draft-pole strap (Hrouda, *Kulturgeschichte*, pl. 26:3, 4) further support the significance of this occurrence on the ivory (my fig. 22).

[72] The annals of Sennacherib record that on the doors of the king's palace there were depicted scenes of Assur going to battle in a chariot, with the divine Amurru as charioteer and the "victorious prince" (presumably Sennacherib) also in the chariot. Rakib-el, the charioteer of El, was a major divinity in the Aramaic pantheon (H. Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods* [Chicago, 1948] p. 327). For additional references to gods, particularly weather-gods, in chariots, see M. Weinfeld, "'Rider of the Clouds' and 'Gatherer of the Clouds,'" *Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society of Columbia University* 5 (1973) pp. 421–427.

[73] Porada, *Corpus*, nos. 640–645.

[74] *SW7* no. 65.

[75] *CNI*, pp. 73–77.

ivory carver was faced with a general theme and selected an individual way of dealing with it.

The sundisk as represented on SW7 plaques is distinguished by two large spiral curls framing the disk. These curls are generally associated with the characteristic hairdo of the Egyptian goddess Hathor. The allusion, as we shall see, is clearly conscious and most appropriate within the context of the SW7 panels, for in her own culture Hathor represents both "the creative force of the sun and at the same time embodies the fertile aspects of vegetation."[76]

This particular form of the sundisk first developed in Anatolia during the period of the Hittite Empire (1400–1200 B.C.).[77] While the symbol is generally seen in association with representations of the king, the presence of Hathor curls reflects Anatolian assimilation of Egyptian elements at this time,[78] especially appropriate since the Hittite sun-deity was also female. It is precisely at those first-millennium North Syrian sites that had strong Hittite and Neo-Hittite traditions that one finds examples of the winged and voluted disk.[79] The blend of West Semitic

---

[76] E. L. B. Terrace and H. G. Fischer, *Treasures of Egyptian Art from the Cairo Museum* (London, 1970) p. 48. Barnett (*CNI*, p. 82) suggested that these curls as worn by female figures on ivories from the Loftus Collection may indicate the Canaanite goddess Qedesh attested on second-millennium monuments, who is often shown with Hathor locks and sundisk on her head, holding lotus flowers. Although W. Helck (*Betrachtungen zur grossen Göttin und den ihr verbundenen Gottheiten* [Munich, 1971] p. 217) has since shown that Qedesh was not a deity but rather an epithet, "qedesh," or holy, that was applied to the goddess Astarte, the association with principles of fertility is clear in any case.

[77] See the representation of Tudhaliya IV (1250–1220 B.C.) at Yazilikaya, in E. Akurgal, *Art of the Hittites* (New York, 1962) pl. XXIX and fig. 78.

[78] K. Bittel, in an address to the Columbia University Seminar on the Archaeology of the Eastern Mediterranean, Eastern Europe and the Near East (December 13, 1973), speculated on the possibility that the Temple of the Storm-God at Bogazkoi owed its form as a freestanding sanctuary surrounded by a walled complex of storerooms to Egyptian prototypes, resulting from contacts be tween the two regions, especially dur-ing the late fourteenth and early thirteenth centuries B.C. In a more recent paper by K. K. Riemschneider, "Who Taught Babylonian to the Egyptians?," presented before the meetings of the American Oriental Society, Philadelphia, March 16, 1976, it was further suggested that there were Hittites in residence in the Egyptian court in the early fourteenth century.

[79] In one example (Woolley and Lawrence, *Carchemish* II, pl. A.16:1), the center disk contains the four-pointed star related to the Hittite "signe royale." The continuation of second-millennium motifs into North Syrian art of the first millennium is most apparent in the banquet scenes and representations of seated figures: for example, the reliefs of Yağri and Alaça Hüyük (H. Bossert, *Altanatolien* [Berlin, 1942] figs. 571, 516), that continued in the ninth-century reliefs of Zinjirli, Carchemish, and Marash, as well as in the eighth-century examples cited earlier from Zinjirli, Marash, and Tell Rifa'at (*USK*, pls. 57c, 21c, 43i, 45b, 66d, 45d, g, 46a, 47d, 48i).

with Hittite traditions clearly had begun during the syncretistic period of the Hittite Empire in the late second millennium, when sons of the Hittite king were installed in Aleppo and in Carchemish. Illustrative of this process and particularly apt for the present discussion is a text from Ras Shamra of that time, in which the Hittite sun-goddess of Arinna is referred to as the "Shepesh" of Arinna—the name of the Canaanite sun-goddess.[80]

Thus, on those occasions when a female figure holding blossoms appears above the winged disk on SW7 ivories (figs. 2, 14, 24), Mallowan has identified her with Shepesh.[81] In drawing upon the West Semitic traditions of the Ugaritic texts, it is assumed that the first-millennium tradition in Syria did not radically change from the second millennium, although no comparable body of literature exists from the later period.

Who is this goddess Shepesh and what were her functions? In the poem of Ba'al, Shepesh is not a major figure. She is called "luminary of the gods," and as such serves as a messenger for El.[82] She is sometimes described in her destructive aspect, "burning hot," so that "the furrows in the field are cracked with drought."[83] But she is also enlisted as a helper of Anath, accompanying the goddess down into the earth to retrieve Ba'al and thus return fertility (and life) to the earth.[84] In the "Pantheon List" from Ras Shamra, she is cited immediately after Anath.[85]

It is tempting to rely upon these Ugaritic texts, the Ba'al myth in particular, and to see in the ivories analogies to Ba'al the storm-god and his sister, Anath, providing fertility to the earth, aided by the sun-goddess Shepesh. It is equally tempting to see in the seated male figure of the griffin panel (fig. 7) Ba'al himself, his feet resting on the bulls of the storm-god, cup in hand, and flanked by animal-bearers, as if this were an illustration of the occasion described in the myth in which,

---

[80] R. Dussaud, *Les Religions des Hittites et des Hourrites*, p. 335, cited in *N&R* II, p. 496, note 59.

[81] *SW7*, pp. 16–18; *N&R* II, pp. 496–498.

[82] *CML*, Baal III*C i 15.

[83] *CML*, Baal Vv 17–18, II viii 21–23, III ii 24–25, III iii 24–iv 3.

[84] *CML*, Baal Ii 7–15, III iv 17–20. For a study of the sun-goddess, see A. Caquot, "La divinité solaire ougaritique," *Syria* XXXVI (1959) pp. 90–101, in which the goddess is described as a minor deity serving as an "element of scientific explanation" in the fertility myths.

[85] J. Nougayrol et al., *Ugaritica* V (Paris, 1968) pp. 45, 11, 20, 21.

after Ba'al's defeat of Yam, "[they] held a feast for him and gave him to drink; [they] gave a cup into his hand."[86]

Yet before one applies a specific story to the representations on the SW7 panels, it must be pointed out that there are similarly enticing elements in other myths of the mid-second millennium B.C. For example, Shepesh also plays a beneficent role in the story of "Shaḥar and Shalim"—twin gods identified as dawn and dusk and associated with viticulture, at whose birth Shepesh makes "tendrils abound with . . . and with grapes."[87] The image of the twin figures in flowerpot helmets springs to mind (fig. 24), particularly in regard to the siren figures in the sundisk, and the tendrillike quality of the branches.

It is also necessary to explore the possibility that the winged creatures do not represent the sun-goddess at all. The blossoms held by siren figures on our plaques are generally associated with Astarte, goddess of fertility, on both second- and first-millennium monuments.[88] I have already referred to attributes of Astarte in conjunction with representations of the seated women and female sphinxes on several plaques from the SW7 group. However, it must be noted that at present it is not possible to determine if blossoms per se were restricted in association to the single goddess, or if they could serve as attributes of several female divinities.[89]

---

[86] *CML*, Baal Vi 4–19.

[87] *CML*, p. 23; Shahar & Shalim i 25–26.

[88] Kantor, "A Bronze Plaque with Relief Design from Tell Tainat," pp. 93–117; R. D. Barnett, "North Syrian and Related Harness Decorations," in K. Bittel, ed., *Vorderasiatische Archäologie* (Berlin, 1964) pp. 21–26. There is a small silver pendant from Zinjirli, on which a nude frontal female, her arms bent at the elbow, holds a blossom in each hand (*AiS* V, pl. 47f). Although the figure is not identified by inscription, she is iconographically the same as those represented on the equestrian plaques discussed by Kantor and Barnett. It should be noted also that Astarte is the only second-millennium goddess mentioned in a first-millennium text—as one of the six Phoenician deities called to witness the treaty of Esarhaddon with Ba'alus of Tyre, about 671 B.C. (R. Borger, *Die Inschriften Assarhaddons, Königs von Assyrien* [Graz, 1956] p. 109, line 18).

[89] A clothed frontal female holding blossoms is represented on the Meharde stele, found outside of Hamath (*CNI*, fig. 14; *USK*, pl. 38g). The inscription identifies her as "Great Queen of HA-country." According to J. D. Hawkins, "This could be a writing of 'Hamath,' as Egypt is elsewhere written MI-country—i.e. Mizri. The Great Queen in that case must be a goddess, and the chief goddess of Hamath was called Pahalatis in other contemporary inscriptions, i.e., Ba'alat" (personal communication). Unfortunately, it is not clear to what extent Ba'alat was considered a separate deity or an epithet. Closest to our winged females with head and arms but no body are the sirens with blossoms incised on tridachna shells that have been found throughout the Near East and the Mediterranean. However, the figure on the shells has never been

Finally, the assimilation of the two chief goddesses of the Ugaritic pantheon, Anath and Athirat (Astarte), is attested during the late second millennium[90] and is reflected in the myth of Ba'al where both Anath and Athirat carry Ba'al's cup.[91] Given this assimilation, it is significant that in the Ugaritic literature, Anath is sometimes described as a bird of prey with outstretched wings.[92] A particularly suggestive reference occurs in the myth of Aqhat, in which Anath joins a flock of eagles hovering above the hero during a meal, in order to steal his divine bow.[93] Aqhat, who is associated with fertility, is warned in the use of his weapon that he must offer the first fruits of the chase to "his" (presumably Ba'al's) temple.[94] His father, Danel, is a chthonic deity; like Aqhat, Danel is associated with the produce of the earth.[95] One could relate this story as well to the SW7 group: winged female sirens with outstretched eagle's wings as Anath; animal bearers as Aqhat; men with plants to emphasize fertility; and two like figures in the flowerpot helmet series, not as twins but rather as Danel and Aqhat.

At the present time, the evidence stems to be weighted toward an identification of the SW7 siren figures with the sun-goddess only because of the apparently interchangeable places occupied by the sirens and the simple winged sundisks with Hathor curls, suggesting that the simple disks are but an abbreviated rendering of the same symbol.[96]

---

identified (see the bibliography in S. Stucchi, "Un nuovo frammento di Tridacna Incisa," *Bolletino d'Arte* 44 [1959] pp. 158–166).

[90] W. F. Albright, *The Archaeology and Religion of Israel* (Baltimore, 1942) pp. 74–75. For monuments, see I. E. S. Edwards, "A Relief of Qudshu-Astarte-Anath in the Winchester College Collection," *JNES* 14 (1955) pp. 49–51, pl. III, where a nude goddess holding a blossom in her right hand and a serpent in her left is shown standing on the back of a lion. The accompanying inscription identifies her as all three goddesses.

[91] *CML*, Baal Vv 33–34. In another Ras Shamra text describing a banquet of the gods (R. S. 24.258, translated by C. Viroulleaud, in Nougayrol et al., *Ugaritica* V, pp. 545–551), Anath and Astarte prepare a meal together for (presumably) El.

[92] See Virolleaud in *Ugaritica* V, pp. 553–555, regarding R. S. 24.252.

[93] *CML*, Aqhat III i 20–21; III i 30–32.

[94] *CML*, Aqhat V 36–38, and p. 53 note 13.

[95] Implied in *CML*, Aqhat III i 15, I i 30–31. Driver notes on p. 8 that Anath clearly intends to revive Aqhat after he is inadvertently killed (III i 16); he must have been resurrected at the end of the poem, which is now missing.

[96] Mallowan (*SW7*, p. 17) has suggested that if the winged siren figures represent the female sun-goddess, then perhaps the winged disk alone represents the sun in its male aspect, a reference to the male solar deities of neighboring Babylonia and Assyria. With this I must disagree, first because there is no reason to assume such a reference in ivories produced in North Syria, and second because all of the winged disks retain the feminine association of the Hathor curls, which are absent only when the siren figures with their own hair curls are placed above.

This equation of sirens and winged sundisks would seem to be supported by the recent discovery of a pair of bronze equestrian ornaments in a late eighth-century tomb at Salamis, Cyprus, on which a female siren figure is seen over the head of a nude "mistress of animals" (fig. 32).[97] On other equestrian ornaments of similar date, this same nude female is frequently represented with a simple winged disk in the field above.[98] As on the SW7 plaques, then, the two elements seem to be interchangeable in otherwise standard compositions. Nevertheless, there does remain the enigmatic representation on the Bomford plaque—an equestrian frontlet of North Syrian style although of unknown provenance—where we see clearly a harpylike creature with the head of a woman and the body of an eagle, including talons, in the field above a nude female.[99]

It is indeed unfortunate that no relevant first-millennium literary texts have been preserved with which to compare the representations on the SW7 ivories. The Ugaritic texts cited above appear related to the scenes represented on the ivories, although no definite correlations can be made. This may be because the representations are not specifically parallel to a text; or, if they are, because we do not have the text. In this regard, it is important to keep in mind that the ancient ivory carver would have taken a common cultural vocabulary for granted and would not necessarily have been explicit in his literary allusions.[100]

Thus, while we cannot for the present match precisely the representations on the ivories with known texts, what is clear is the general consistency in thematic material from panel to panel: winged disk, plant elements, figures associated with trees, and laden tables. All of these elements reflect a common meaning: the daily rising of the sun, like the daily opening of the lotus in its flowering season, reflects that continuity necessary for life, which then requires sustenance from the

---

[97] The pieces arc badly corroded (see Karageorghis, *Excavations in the Necropolis of Salamis* III, pl. LXXXIX). Despite the solution presented by the published drawings, I wonder whether the siren's appendages are spread talons or blossoms held in outstretched hands.

[98] Examples occur from Nimrud (J. J. Orchard, *Ivories from Nimrud (1949–1963), Fascicule I:1: Equestrian Bridle-Harness Ornaments* [Aberdeen, 1967] pl. XXVIII) and from Gordion (R. S. Young, "The 1961 Campaign at Gordion," *AJA* 66 [1962] pl. 46).

[99] Barnett, "North Syrian and Related Harness Decorations," pl. 11:3.

[100] On Babylonian narrative art being allusive rather than depictive, see A. Perkins, "Narrative in Babylonian Art," *AJA* 61 (1957) p. 55.

earth whose abundance is celebrated by the laden tables.[101] Nor is the
hunt out of place in this context. The successful hunt, like war, ends in
victory; and, like the motif of the bud and lotus, implies the cycle of
death which must preceed rebirth. It is striking that both the goddesses
Anath and Astarte and the storm-god as well combine in themselves
the dual aspects of fertility and war; as if fertility too was won through
struggle and thus the achievement thereof was to be celebrated as a
victory after battle.[102]

    Despite individual variations, then, the SW7 ivories were clearly
produced according to a single iconographic program. This unity in
conception strongly suggests that the scenes not only had a meaning,
but also a purpose. Although the links to fertility might imply that the
pieces were more appropriately to be associated with beds than with
chairs, it is equally possible that the panels decorated chairs that served
some special function, such as specific repasts or ceremonies. The chairs
may even have been part of temple furniture; they are significantly like
those upon which the goddesses sit on reliefs from Maltai and elsewhere,
and seem to exemplify the "seat for a god [with] a rest at [its] back,"
presented to Athirat in the poem of Ba'al,[103] while in the inventory
texts of Assurbanipal from Nineveh, mention is made of ceremonial
furniture used in connection with the cults of specific deities.[104]

Dating and Historical Perspective

As far as the date of the ivories is concerned, the chronology of North
Syria in this period is essentially linked to that of Assyria. The best

---

[101] It is during this period in Egypt and Phoenicia that the corollary motif of
the infant Horus, called the "infant sun," seated on a lotus, became popular in art.
Tait ("The Egyptian Relief Chalice," p. 135) specifically associates the motif with
rejuvenation.

[102] This may explain why both warriors and caretakers of the sacred tree wear the
same garment on the SW7 plaques. The observation was made, but not pursued, by
G. Herrmann in *SW7*, p. 26; Mallowan, *SW7*, p. 10, does refer to the men grasping
trees as "powerful warriors," without indicating, however, why he calls them this.

[103] *CML*, Baal II ii 31–32.

[104] A. R. Millard, "Fragments of Historical Texts from Nineveh: Ashurbanipal,"
Iraq XXX (1968) p. 108: (B.M. 83–1–18, 600 – B.M. 123425): bed of…wood with
precious stones for Bel and Beltiya "for performing marriage"; bed of ebony overlaid
with gold for Marduk.

parallels for Assyrian elements on the SW7 plaques come from the reliefs of Tiglath Pileser III—such as the hairstyle of foreign mercenaries and prisoners (fig. 27); the common court garment of long-skirted robe with fringed shawl wrapped around the waist and over one shoulder (figs. 1, 33); sandal type;[105] the armor worn by horsemen (fig. 34); a possible variant on the flowerpot helmet worn by another horseman (fig. 35); and a tasseled cloth covering the king's throne, similar to that used on the seats of the ivory plaques.[106] In addition, the best comparison for the couchant lions that appear on several plaques is with the lions of the column bases from Building II at Tell Tainat, which are dated after the Assyrian annexation of Pattina by Tiglath Pileser in 743 B.C. (figs. 24, 36).[107]

Clearly, the parallels from Zinjirli are from the period of Bar Rakib, king of ancient Sam'al from about 730 to 720 B.C. Striking similarities have also been observed with the hunt relief of the palace enclosure of Sakçe Gözü, demonstrated by Ussishkin to date to the first half of the eighth century.[108] In a paper presented before the American

---

[105] Madhloom, *Chronology*, p. 69.

[106] Thureau-Dangin, *Til Barsib Atlas*, pl. xLvii. Furniture styles did not change substantially from the ninth through the seventh centuries B.C. and so cannot be used in chronological arguments.

[107] Stylistic similarities, as pointed out by Herrmann, *SW7*, p. 88, may be seen in the open mouth, crouching posture, and clear distinction of the ruff from the rest of the mane. For the date of Building II at Tell Tainat, see R. C. Haines, *Excavations in the Plain of Antioch: The Structural Remains of the Later Phases* (Chicago, 1971) p. 66.

[108] D. Ussishkin, "The Dates of the Neo-Hittite Enclosure at Sakçagözü," *BASOR* pp. 181 (1966) 15–23. In his article cited in note 26, Ussishkin tried unconvincingly to show that the ivories should have been carved prior to the Sakçe Gözü huht relief, because of the six-spoked chariot wheels and the form of the chariot (*BASOR* 203, pp. 26–27). His arguments have been refuted by M. A. Littauer and J. Crouwel ("The Dating of a Chariot Ivory from Nimrun Considered Once Again," *BASOR* 209 [1973] pp. 27–33), who demonstrate that the profile of the chariot box on the ivory is one known from the reign of Tiglath Pileser III on, and that although the six-spoked chariot wheel is generally associated with the ninth century, there is at least one chariot of the period of Tiglath Pileser that has only six spokes. Ultimately, Littauer and Crouwel opt for a date in the reign of Sargon II of Assyria (722–705 B.C.) for the hunt ivory, because the four-passenger chariot first appears in reliefs at that time. However, it must be emphasized that the ivories are not Assyrian, but rather North Syrian. Just as the chariot with an eight-spoked wheel appeared earlier in North Syria than in Assyria, the four-passenger vehicle may well have been developed first in Syria and subsequently adopted in Assyria. I believe that the evidence amassed by Littauer and Crouwel is consistent with the strong arguments for dating the rest of the SW7 group within the reign of Tiglath Pileser III.

Oriental Society in 1972, I suggested that the relationship apparent in reliefs from Zinjirli and from the palace at Sakçe Gözü was due to close political ties between the two sites, and that both had probably been part of the ancient kingdom of Sam'al. In any event, the reliefs from the two sites were products of the same workshop and are alike in overall style and specific details of rendering as well as in conception.[109] Thus, the palace of Sakçe Gözü, whether the site was politically allied with Zinjirli or not, evidently belonged to the same cultural tradition and looked, presumably, to the larger site for its craftsmen, much as Solomon, in building his temple and palace at Jerusalem, called in artisans from Tyre.[110]

I would suggest, therefore, that the SW7 ivories, as a coherent sub-group within the North Syrian style of the early first millennium B.C., were produced in the same cultural context as the Zinjirli and Sakçe Gözü reliefs—in Sam'al, during the reigns of both Tiglath Pileser III and Bar Rakib. This would accord roughly with the date of about 740–730 proposed by Mallowan and Herrmann as the most reasonable period for the ivories' production.[111]

At this time, Bar Rakib of Sam'al was a vassal of Tiglath Pileser of Assyria. An inscription written by Bar Rakib for his father, Panamuwa II, describes how the earlier king had been killed "running at the side" of the Assyrian king's chariot; in other words, while fighting with the Assyrian army, presumably against Damascus in 733.[112] The representation

---

[109] Akurgal, in *Greece*, p. 60, noted the relationship between the female sphinx orthostat of Hilani II at Zinjirli and the male sphinx orthostats of Sakçe Gözü, as well as that of the lions from Hilani II with the gateway lions of the Hallenbau P, also at Zinjirli, thus establishing the stylistic unity of sculpture from a building dated to the reign of Bar Rakib with work from Sakçe Gözü. To this may be added close similarities in the various representations of Bar Rakib, as well as attendant-figures from Hilani III, with the Sakçe Gözü king relief, and in the female sphinx column bases from both sites (see my unpublished dissertation, pp. 207–210).

[110] I Kings 5.

[111] *SW7*, p. 62. The reference on p. 64 of *SW7* to the presence of "Phoenician or Aramaean" fitters' marks on the backs of several plaques supports my argument. These markings were not recorded at the time of their excavation before they were masked in protective bandages. However, since the plaques are in the North Syrian style, the markings are probably not Phoenician. The presence of Aramaean signs would seem to rule out a provenance such as Carchemish, where the Hittite hieroglyphic script was still used, and would be consistent with the hypothesis that the ivories were produced in Sam'al.

[112] For the inscription of Panamuwa, see H. Donner and W. Röllig, *Kanaanäische und Aramäische Inschriften* I (Wiesbaden, 1962) pp. 223–224, no. 215.

of foreign bowmen on the reliefs of Tiglath Pileser III (fig. 27) thus takes on greater significance as an illustration of the type of event recorded in the Aramaean inscription. And as further support for the suggestion of the ivories' manufacture in Sam'al, in a study of foreigners represented on Assyrian reliefs, M. Wäfler has shown that the particular hairdo of corkscrew curls (as seen on several of the ivories as well as on the "foreign" bowmen) is peculiar to men of Sam'al.[113]

While we cannot definitely conclude that the ivories could not have been produced before Tiglath Pileser's reign, or subsequently, in the reign of Sargon II (722–705 B.C.), it is likely that they were executed and delivered to Nimrud during Tiglath Pileser's time. Mallowan makes it clear that Fort Shalmaneser was used by Tiglath Pileser.[114] What is more, in 738, the king of Sam'al had been included in Tiglath Pileser's tribute lists, in which gifts of ivory were noted.[115]

The SW7 ivories may well have been tribute for the Assyrian king from his vassal at Sam'al, either Panamuwa or Bar Rakib, although, as it is assumed that Bar Rakib lived into the reign of Shalmaneser V (726–722 B.C.), it is possible that the furniture was a gift presented to Shalmaneser on his accession to the throne. That such a gift would have been considered appropriately lavish is implied in the annals of the various Assyrian kings who prized ivory furniture as booty or tribute. It is even more eloquently suggested in the poem of Ba'al, in the joy with which Athirat received her gifts of a chair, footstool, and table, fit "for a god."[116]

Summary and Conclusion

Now that all of the threads of stylistic parallels for the SW7 ivories, their iconographic content, and chronological placement have been drawn together, the significance of the group becomes clear. For in this

---

[113] M. Wäfler, *Nicht-Assyrer neuassyrischer Darstellungen*, Alter Orient und Altes Testament 26 (Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1975) p. 186 and figs. 104, 106, 107.

[114] *N&R* II, p. 469.

[115] *AR* I, §§ 772, 801.

[116] *CML*, Baal II ii 29–31. For the value placed on fine ivory work, see R. S. 25.421 in Nougayrol et al., *Ugaritica* V, pp. 315, 317, in which a goddess's beauty is likened to the perfection of an ivory panel.

single collection we are provided with not one, but four conclusions regarding fine ivory work in the early first millennium B.C.

First, as regards centers of production, Barnett, in his publication of the Nimrud ivories excavated by Loftus and Layard, suggested that the entire group was carved at Hamath, which he proposed as the center of ivory working in the early first millennium.[117] This was later supported by Riis, who cited waste flakes of ivory, as if from a workshop, found in the excavation of the palace at that site.[118] Whether or not there was ivory carving at Hamath is not within the scope of this paper to determine. By distinguishing a significant subgroup within the Syrian style and attributing it to Sam'al, however, I do suggest the existence of at least one local center of manufacture. Since Sam'al was not one of the larger or wealthier states of North Syria in the ninth and eighth centuries B.C., such a conclusion implies a model of multiple centers of production of fine ivory work at this time—on the pattern of Syrian cities in more recent times, where most luxury production is carried out in independent operations in each major center.[119] The validity of this suggestion for antiquity is strengthened by the presence at Al Mina on the Syrian coast of ivory tusks partially sawed for carving. It is supported in the Assyrian records where receipt of ivory tusks is recorded from both Carchemish and Pattina, suggesting that the raw materials necessary for local production were at hand.[120] And implication that the existence of various centers of ivory production was recognized in antiquity itself is contained in the annals of Shalmaneser III of Assyria, in which the chronicler carefully distinguishes among the types of ivory furniture taken as booty from different cities: ebony furniture set with ivory from Carchemish, ivory furniture overlaid in silver and gold from Bit Adini, and inlaid (*tamlu*) ivory furniture from Damascus.[121] It is therefore highly likely that upon further stylistic analysis, additional subgroups within the Syrian style of ivory carving can be attributed

---

[117] *CNI*, p. 46, and reaffirmed in R. D. Barnett, "Hamath and Nimrud," *Iraq* 25 (1963) pp. 81–84.

[118] P. J. Riis, *Sukas* I (Copenhagen, 1970) p. 169.

[119] See P. K. Hitti, *History of Syria* (London, 1951) p. 49, and A. H. M. Jones, "Asian Trade in Antiquity," in D. S. Richards, ed., *Islam and the Trade of Asia* (London, 1970) pp. 1–10, especially p. 8.

[120] Al Mina: *CNI*, p. 165, note 1. Balawat: L. W. King, *The Bronze Reliefs from the Gates of Shalmaneser, King of Assyria* (London, 1915) pls. XXVIII, XXXIII.

[121] *AR* I, §§ 475, 476, 740.

to other centers of production, and that other media, for example metalwork, would also yield to subdivision.

Second, in addition to implying the existence of multiple ivory-working centers, the SW7 assemblage provides us with information about the organization of craft production during this period, unfortunately so absent in contemporary documents. For example, we can see that a single center contained multiple workshops, and that an individual workshop could include several craftsmen.

Third, the closely related panels in the SW7 collection exhibit a range in quality and treatment of the single iconographic theme that allows us to glimpse solutions chosen by individual artists within the program's specifications and that suggests the limits of any rigidly linear notion of stylistic development through time.

Finally, fourth, the very recognition of a "program"—appropriate iconographic themes related to classes of objects—makes clear the close ties that must have existed between other classes of objects and their decoration at this time. This observation unites the SW7 ivories with a corpus of monuments as far-reaching as the chair of the archbishop of Ravenna, with its panels of the evangelists and John the Baptist (fig. 10), as well as the sculptural programs of classical and medieval architecture. In fact, it is perhaps particularly apt to close with the throne of the archbishop, as it has been speculated that the panel illustrated here is the product of a Syrian workshop, or of Syrian craftsmen in Constantinople during the sixth century A.D.[122] This opens up the specific problem discussed here to the broader context in which the throne of Maximian is in a very real sense the heir to the Syrian ivory-carving tradition of the first millennium B.C. It suggests, despite gaps in the archaeological record, a continuity in tradition of considerable importance in the later history of the art of fine ivory work, of which the SW7 panels represent a significant part of the earlier phases.

---

[122] R. Hinks, *Carolingian Art* (London, 1935) pp. 43–44.

Acknowledgments

Sources Abbreviated

AiS   F. von Luschan, *Ausgrabungen in Sendschirli* (Berlin, 1893–1943)

AJA   *American Journal of Archaeology*

Anat. Stud. *Anatolian Studies*

AR   D. D. Luckenbill, *Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia* I, II (Chicago, 1926, 1927)

BASOR   *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*

CML   G. R. Driver, *Canaanite Myths and Legends* (Edinburgh, 1956)

CNI   R. D. Barnett, *Catalogue of the Nimrud Ivories in the British Museum* (London, 1957)

JEA   *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*

JNES   *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*

LAAA   *Liverpool Annals of Archaeology and Anthropology*

N&R   M. Mallowan, *Nimrud and its Remains* (New York, 1966)

SW7   M. Mallowan and G. Herrmann, *Ivories from Nimrud (1949–9631), Fascicule III: Furniture from SW7, Fort Shalmaneser* (Aberdeen, 1974)

USK   W. Orthmann, *Untersuchungen zur spräthetischen Kunst* (Bonn, 1971)

Figure 1. Ivory plaque. Room SW7, Fort Shalmaneser, Nimrud. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 59.107.4.

Figure 2. Ivory plaque. Room SW7, Fort Shalmaneser. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 59.107.7.

Figure 3. Ivory plaque. Room SW7, Fort Shalmaneser. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 58.31.2.
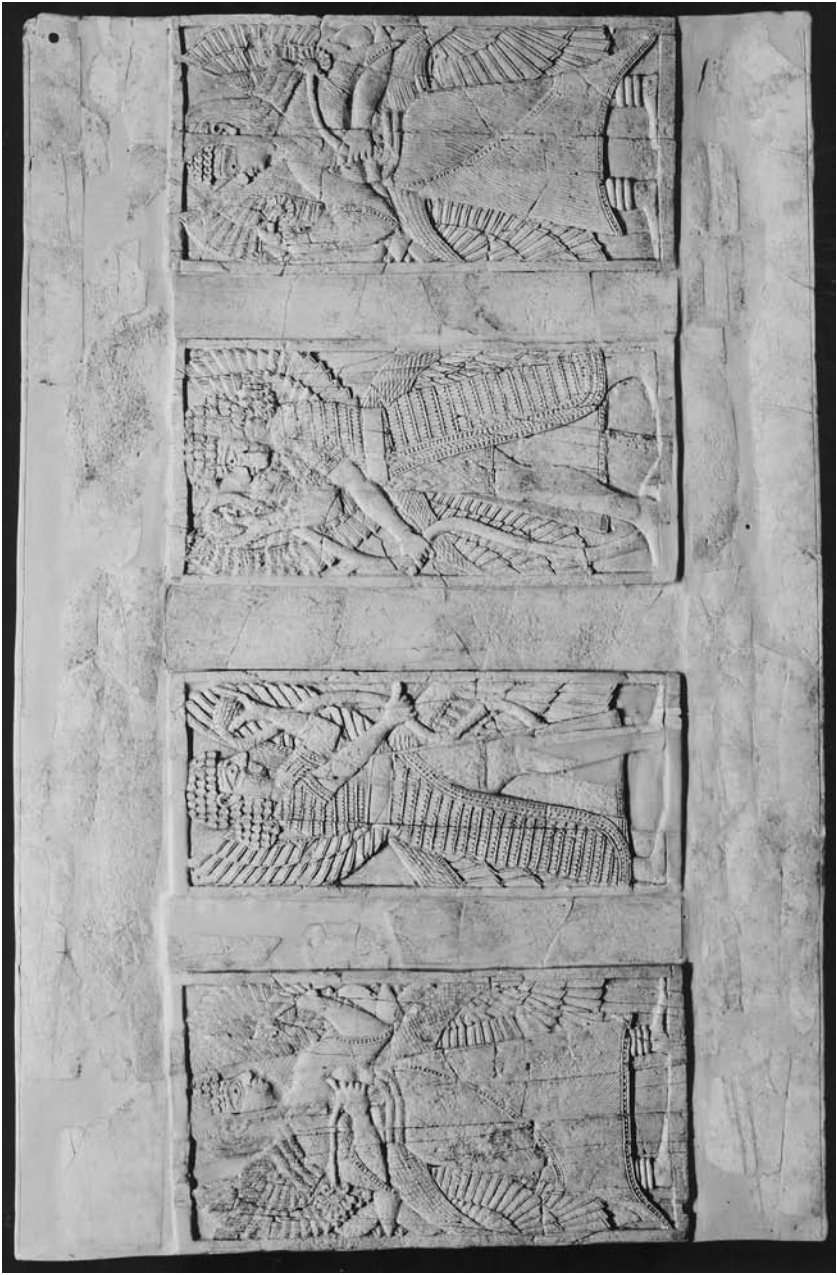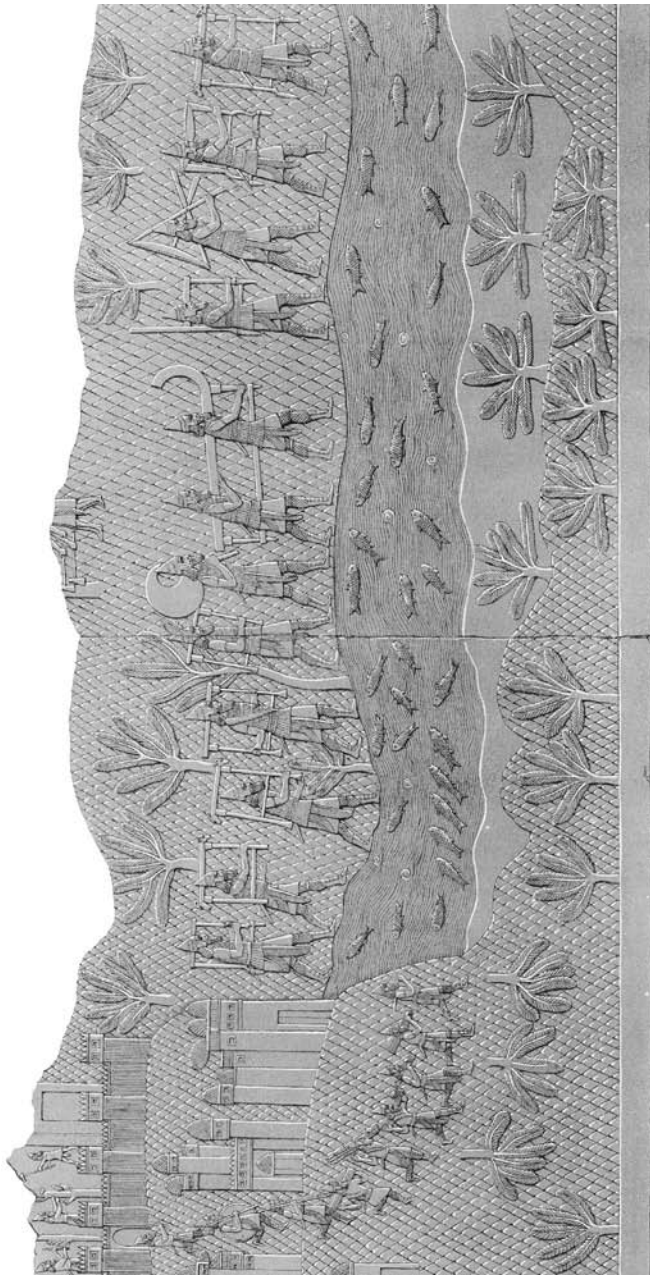
Figure 5. Drawing of a relief. Palace of Sennacherib, Nineveh (original lost).
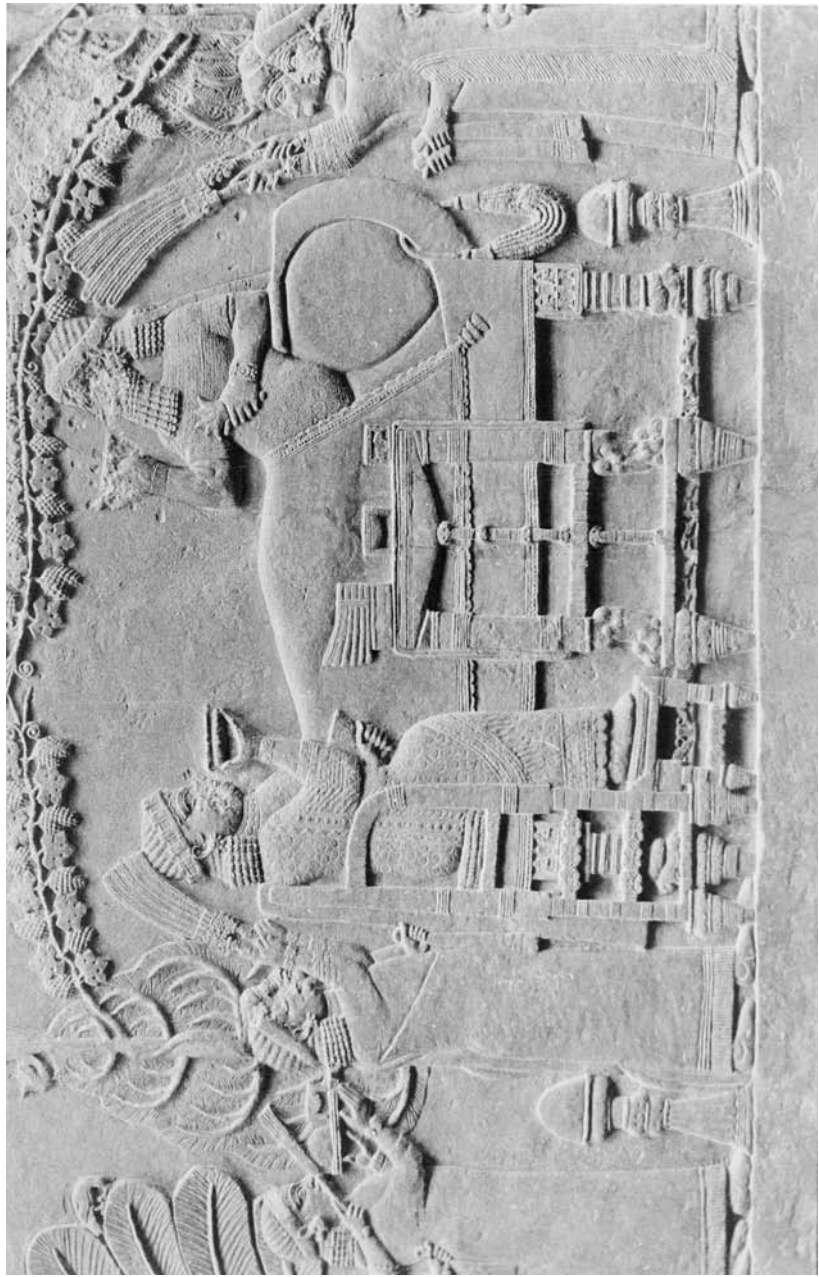
Figure 6. Relief. Palace of Assurbanipal, Nineveh. The British Museum, no. 124920 (courtesy the Trustees of the British Museum).
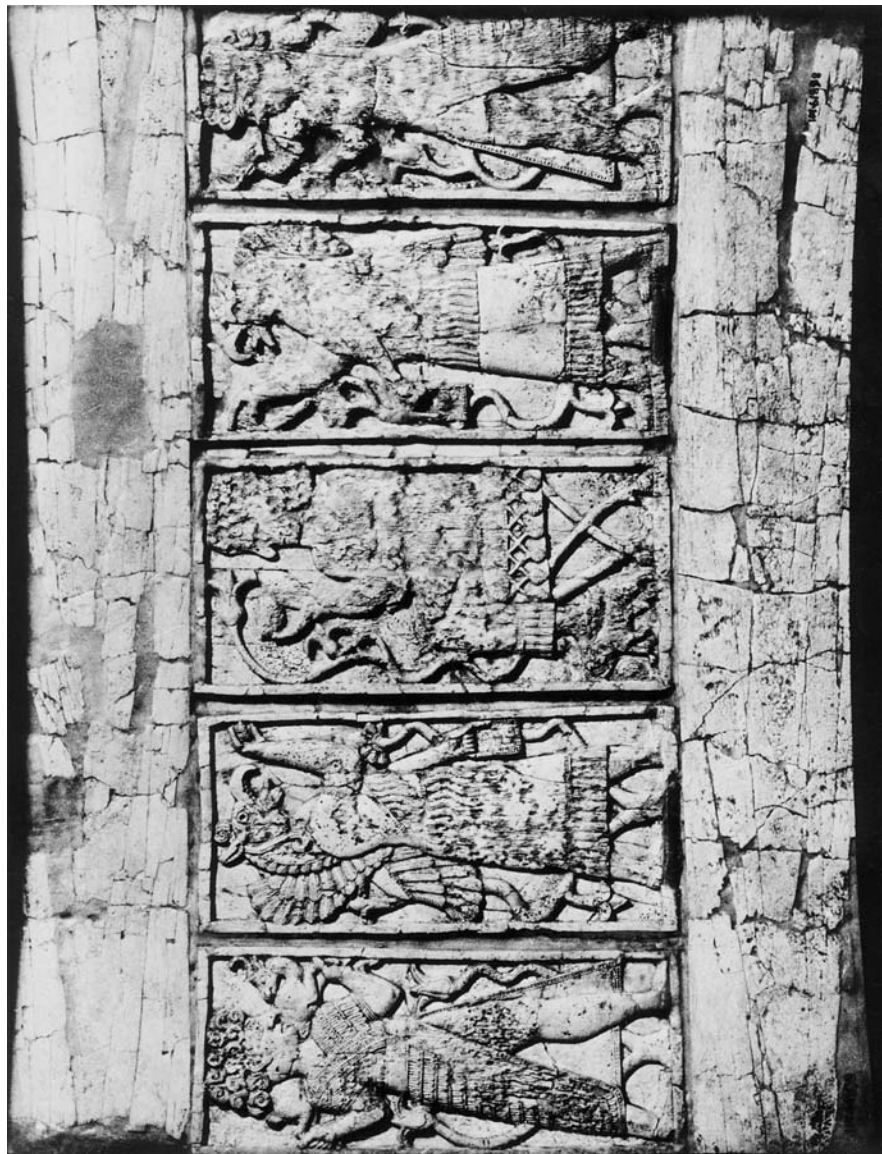
Figure 7. Ivory panel. Room SW7, Fort Shalmaneser. Iraq Museum, Baghdad, 61898 (photo: Wm. Collins Sons and Co., London).
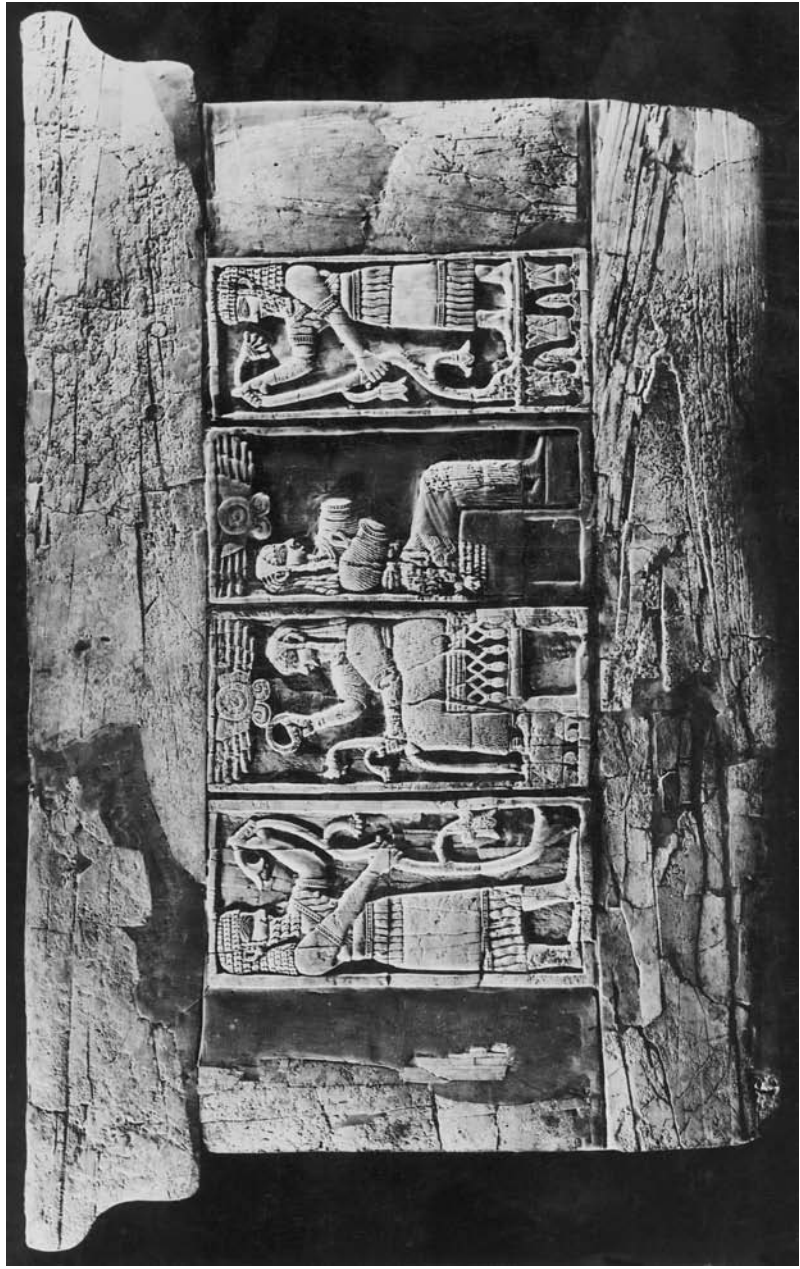
Figure 8. Ivory panel. Room SW7, Fort Shalmaneser. Iraq Museum, 62721 (photo: Wm. Collins Sons and Co.).
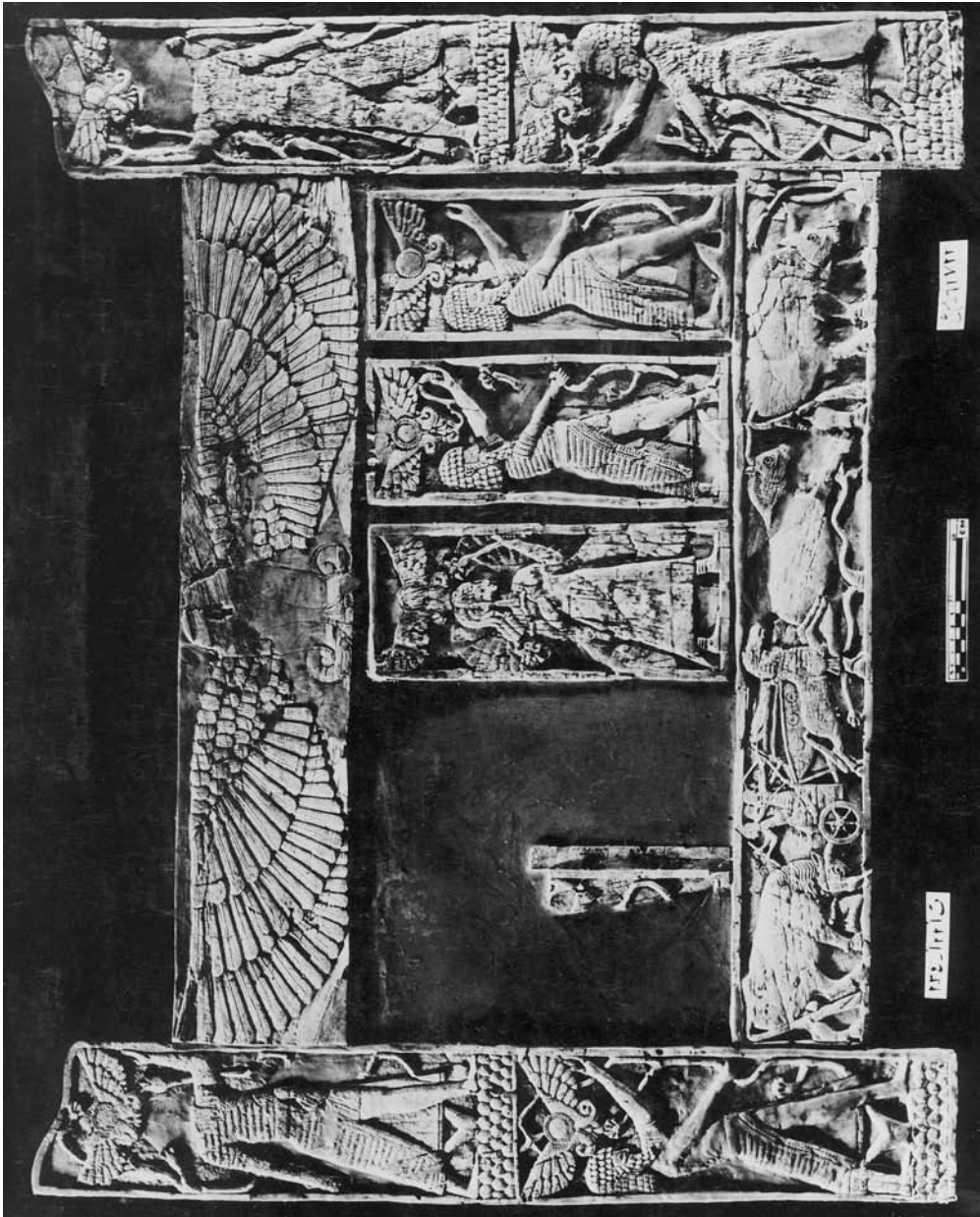
Figure 9. Ivory panel. Room SW7, Fort Shalmaneser. Iraq Museum, 62722 (photo: Wm. Collins Sons and Co.).

Figure 10. Ivory panel. Throne of the Archbishop Maximian. Cathedral of Ravenna.

Figure 11. Silver plaque. Zinjirli. Staatliche Museen, Berlin (photo: courtesy Vorderasiatische Abteilung, Staatliche Museen).

Figure 12. Ivory pyxis fragment. Burnt Palace, Nimrud. The British Museum, no. 131141 (courtesy The Trustees of the British Museum).

Figure 13. Ivory pyxis. Burnt Palace, Nimrud. The British Museum, no. 118173 (courtesy The Trustees of the British Museum).

Figure 14. Ivory plaque. Room SW7, Fort Shalmaneser. Iraq Museum, 62705 (photo: Wm. Collins Sons and Co.).

Figure 15. Ivory plaque. Room SW12, Fort Shalmaneser. Iraq Museum, 65508 (photo: Wm. Collins Sons and Co.).
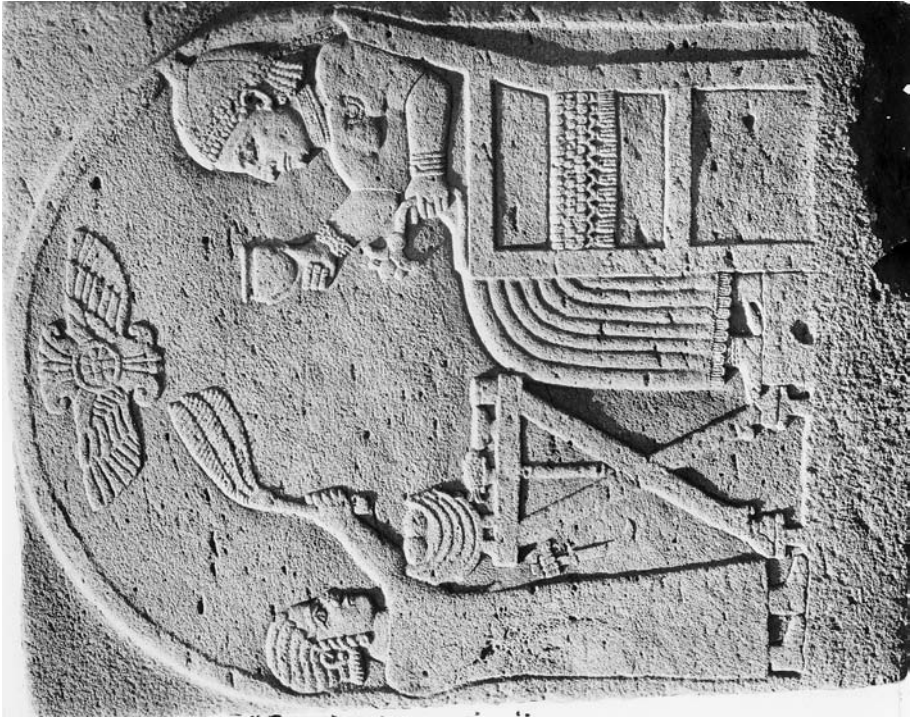
Figure 17. Stela. Zinjirli, about 735–720 B.C. Staatliche Museen, VA2995 (photo: courtesy Vorderasiatische Abteilung, Staatliche Museen).

Figure 16. Ivory plaque. Room SW7, Fort Shalmaneser. Iraq Museum, 60553 (photo: Wm. Collins Sons and Co.).

Figure 18. Relief. Palace portico, Sakçe Gözü. Second half of the eighth century B.C. Archaeological Museum, Ankara, 1811.

Figure 19. Reliefs. Palace façade, Sakçe Gözü. Second half of the eighth century B.C. Archaeological Museum, Ankara 1807, 1810.

Figure 20. Relief. Nordhallenbau, Zinjirli. About 735–725 B.C. Staatliche Museen, VA3007 (photo: courtesy Vorderasiatische Abteilung, Staatliche Museen).

Figure 21. Relief. Enclosure gate, Sakçe Gözü. About mid-eighth century B.C. Staatliche Museen, VA971 (photo: courtesy Vorderasiatische Abteilung, Staatliche Museen).

Figure 22. Hunt scene, detail of Figure 9 (photo: Wm. Collins Sons and Co.).

Figure 23. Relief. Nordhallenbau, Zinjirli. About 735–725 B.C.
Staatliche Museen, VA 3000.

Figure 25. Relief. Citadel gate, Zinjirli. Ninth century B.C. Oriental Museum, Istanbul, 7711 (photo: Oriental Museum).
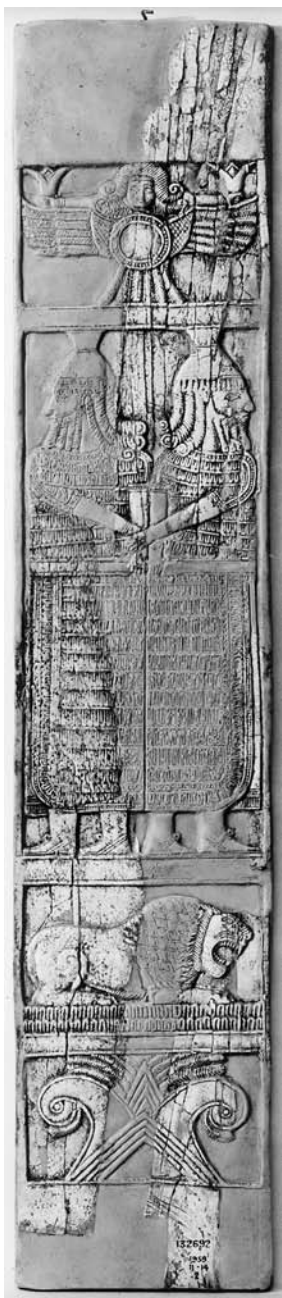
Figure 24. Ivory plaque. Room SW7, Fort Shalmaneser. The British Museum, no. 132692 (courtesy the Trustees of the British Museum).

Figure 26. Relief. Hilani III, Zinjirli. Second half of the eighth century B.C. Oriental Museum, 7730 (photo: W. Schieli, Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Istanbul).

Figure 27. Relief. Palace of Tiglath Pileser III, Nimrud. Archäologisches Institut der Universität, Zurich, 1916.

Figure 28. Winged female figure, detail
of Figure 2.

Figure 30. Bronze cauldron attachment.
Olympia. Eighth century B.C. National
Museum, Athens, B3040 (photo: National
Museum).

Figure 29. Column base. Hilani III, Zinjirli. Second half of the eighth
century B.C. Oriental Museum, 7731 (photo: Oriental Museum).

Figure 31. Drawing of a relief. Palace of Tiglath Pileser III, Nimrud (original lost).
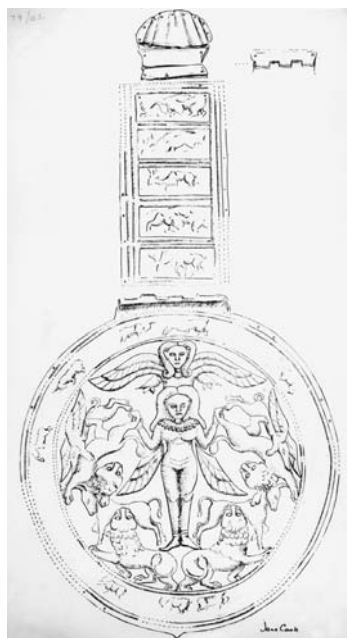
Figure 32. Drawing of a bronze equestrian ornament, Salamis. Eighth century B.C. Cyprus Museum, Nicosia (photo: courtesy Director of Antiquities, Cyprus Museum).
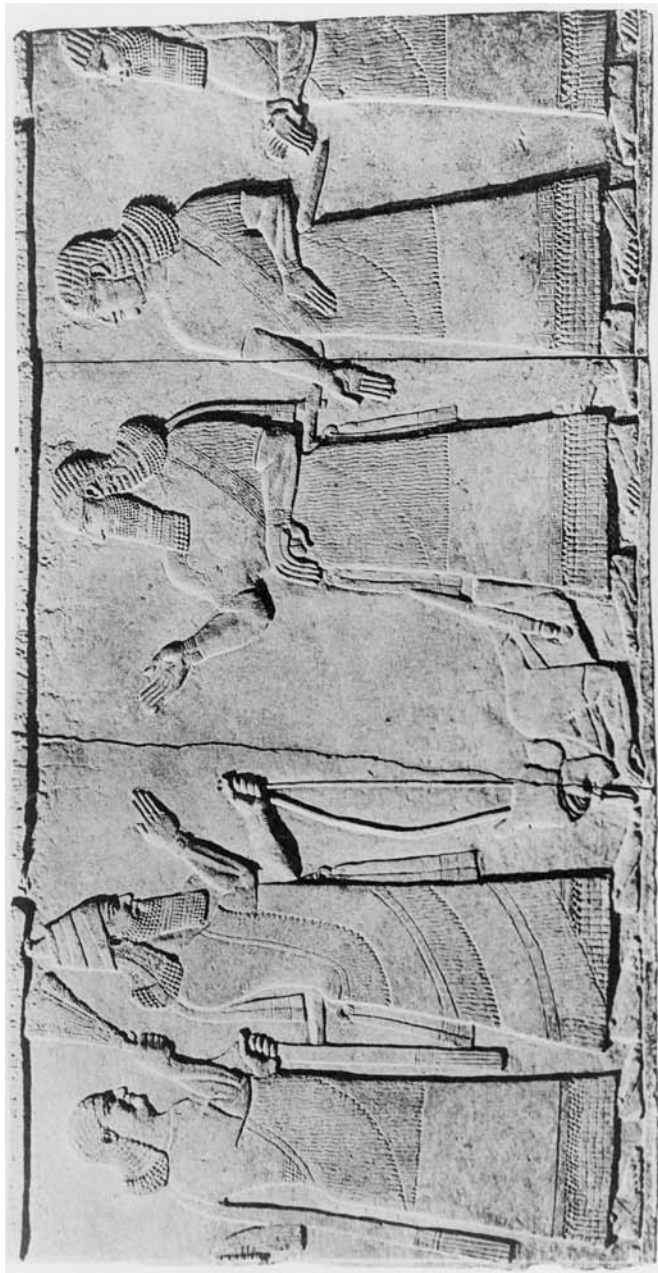
Figure 33. Relief. Palace of Tiglath Pileser III. Detroit Institute of Arts, 50.32.

Figure 34. Relief. Palace of Tiglath Pileser III. The British Museum,
no. 118907 (courtesy the Trustees of the British Museum).

Figure 35. Relief. Palace of Tiglath Pileser III. The British Museum,
no. 118905 (courtesy the Trustees of the British Museum).

Figure 36. Column base. Palace, Tell Tainat. Second half of the eighth century
B.C. Antioch Museum, 6020 (photo: Oriental Institute, University of Chicago).

IS THERE A SOUTH SYRIAN STYLE OF IVORY CARVING IN THE EARLY FIRST MILLENNIUM B.C.?

> The wealth of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria
> shall be carried off before the king of Assyria.
>
> *Isaiah* 8:4

Introduction

The major assemblages of ivory carving preserved from the first millennium B.C. have generally been divided into two groups, Phoenician and North Syrian, and the classic characteristics of these groups are by now quite well established.[1] However, if one defines Phoenicia as corresponding more or less to the coastal strip west of the Lebanon mountains, from the Carmel to Byblos, with the chief cities in antiquity as Tyre, Sidon, Arka, Arwad, Sarafand and Gebeil, and possibly including the Beka'a Valley and the Anti-Lebanon but certainly not further east; and if one defines North Syria as comprising the city states north of the Orontes Valley and south of the Taurus, from the Ḫabur to the Amanus, including Gozan, Bit-Adini, Carchemish, Kummuḫ, Maraş, Sam'al, Arpad, Patina/Unqi and possibly Hamath; then it will be noted that the territory occupied by these two regions in no way encompasses the entire Syro-Palestinian Levant. Notably absent is the area of the powerful kingdom of Aram, whose capital was at Damascus, as well as the kingdom of Israel, with its seat at Samaria—both of which geographical and political units figured prominently in the southern

---

* This article originally appeared as "Is There a South Syrian Style of Ivory Carving in the First Millenium B.C.?" *Iraq* 43 (1987) 101–130.

[1] F. Poulsen, *Der Orient und die frühgriechische Kunst*, Leipzig, 1912, 38–53; R. D. Barnett, "Phoenician and Syrian Ivory Carving", *PEQ* 1939, 4–19; idem, *Catalogue of the Nimrud Ivories in the British Museum*, London, 1957 (henceforth, *CNI*); I. J. Winter, "Phoenician and North Syrian Ivory Carving in Historical Context: Questions of Style and Distribution," *Iraq* 38 (1976), 1–22.

coalition of states met by Shalmaneser III of Assyria in 853 B.C. and in subsequent Assyrian campaigns to the West.[2]

Yet from the Annals of Assyrian kings of this period, we know that booty from Damascus included ivory furniture, not only for Shalmaneser (858–824 B.C.), but also for Adad-nirari III (810–783) and perhaps Tiglath-pileser III (744–727); while Samaria likewise was listed among those kingdoms furnishing ivory to the latter, and Judah, further to the south, to Esarhaddon.[3] In addition, there exists not only the direct Old Testament reference to Ahab's "house of ivory" at Samaria (generally accepted dates: 869–850 B.C.), but also the indirect reference to the men of Samaria "that lie upon couches of ivory", mentioned in Amos' attacks on Israel at the time of Jeroboam II (c. 786–740 B.C.).[4] Both of these images suggest at least the accumulation of luxuries, if not actual manufacture; and indeed the presence of ivory carving of the period has been confirmed by excavation.[5]

Thus we know that there *was* ivory in South Syria in the early first millennium B.C. The question which remains is whether one may argue that ivory goods were being produced there, or if, instead, they were being imported from outside the immediate region.

In the case of Samaria, since Ahab's wife, Jezebel, is identified as a Phoenician princess who brought with her many aspects of her native culture, the ivories found at Samaria have generally been assumed to be Phoenician.[6] As far as Damascus is concerned, there is textual evidence that she maintained close ties historically and politically with the cities of the Phoenician coast,[7] and the few decorated objects recovered from or attributed to Aram seem to support this—in particular the relief of a walking female sphinx wearing the Egyptian double crown, recovered in secondary context from the wall of the Omayyad Mosque

---

[2] D. D. Luckenbill, *Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia*, Vols. I and II, Chicago, 1926 and 1927 (henceforth, *ARAB*), § 611.

[3] *ARAB* I, §§ 475–76, 740. Cf. in this context also, the reference in *Isa.* 8:4 to booty from Damascus and the spoils of Samaria being brought before the king of Assyria, which would also pertain to the period of the second half of the eighth century, and the period from Tiglath-pileser III to Sennacherib, including the fall of Samaria.

[4] I *Kings* 22:39; *Amos* 6:4.

[5] G. A. Reisner, *et al., Harvard Excavations at Samaria*, 2 vols., Cambridge, Mass., 1924 (henceforth, *HE*); J. W. and G. M. Crowfoot, *Samaria-Sebaste II: Early Ivories from Samaria*, London, 1938 (henceforth, *S–S II*).

[6] Cf. K. Kenyon, *Royal Cities of the Old Testament*, New York, 1971, 87–89; H. Frankfort, *Art and Architecture of the Ancient Orient*, Baltimore, 4th revised edition, 1970, 319, 321.

[7] H. Katzenstein, *The History of Tyre*, Jerusalem, 1973, 109, 123–124, 136–137.

in Damascus,[8] which is in good "Phoenician" style (fig. 1). In addition, there is the stele of Bar-Hadad, thought by some to be the king of Aram of the same name, although found near Aleppo in North Syria. It shows a god in kilt and open skirt, striding to the left, an axe over one shoulder, and is dedicated to Melqart, chief deity of Tyre (fig. 2).[9] Another, uninscribed stele, found somewhere in South Syria, contains a four-winged genius wearing the egyptianizing triple *'Atef* crown so frequently associated with Phoenician art (fig. 3).[10]

   On the basis of these established links, and because neither Damascus itself nor any major site of ancient Aram has ever been excavated to prove the contrary, it has generally been taken for granted that the art of Damascus would fall within the Phoenician orbit, and the possibility of an independent production in Damascus, or of an independent and recognizable style emanating from there, has been largely ignored.[11] Nevertheless, the kingdom of Aram was clearly a powerful and wealthy entity, with its own distinct cultural tradition; neither its history nor therefore its art should be merely a carbon copy of Phoenicia. Just as

---

[8] M. Abu-al-Faraj al-Ush *et al.*, *Catalogue du Musée National de Damas*, Damascus, 1969, fig. 15.

[9] Cf. M. Dunand, "Stèle araméenne dediée à Melqart", *BMB 3* (1939) 65–76 and Pl. XIII; and H. Donner and W. Röllig, *Kanaanäische und Aramäische Inschriften I, II and III*, 2nd edition; Wiesbaden, 1962–64 (henceforth, *KAI*), no. 201, for inscription. A more recent discussion of the issues raised by this stele is presented in E. Lipiński, *Studies in Aramaic Inscriptions and Onomastics, I*, Leuven, 1975, pp. 15–19. On the basis of a new reading for the patronymic of Bar-Hadad, he argues that the individual named cannot be Bar-Hadad I of I Kings 15, 18–20; rather, this Bar-Hadad, son of one "Idri-Šamš, (who was) father of the King of Aram" may well designate a brother of Hazael (*c.* 842–803 B.C.), and the King of Aram mentioned is likely to be a reference to Hazael himself. The script of the inscription is taken to be less developed than that of the Zakur inscription that cites Bar-Hadad (II), son of Hazael, which would suggest a date in the second half of the ninth century or very early eighth century for the "Melqart" stele. Finally, W. Shea, "The Kings of the Melqart Stele," *Maarav 1/2* (1979) 159–176, reads "*Idr* of *dmśq* (Damascus)" (rather than "Idri-Šamš") whom he associates with Adad-'Idri (*c.* 853–842), and thus would see the stele dated around the middle of the ninth century. In any event, the range of dates proposed for the stele—mid-ninth through early eighth century—serve well as contemporary with or just antecedent to the ivories which we shall be discussing.

[10] H. Th. Bossert, *Altsyrien*, Tübingen, 1951, no. 484. On the crown, cf. discussion in R. D. Barnett, "Anath, Ba'al and Pasargadae", *Mélanges de l'Université Saint Joseph XLV, fasc. 15* (1969), 407–422.

[11] The one more measured formulation is presented by M-C. de Graeve, in the article on "Intarsien" (*RlA* V/1–2, 123), where she proposes to replace the term Phoenician with word "Levantine," since the alphabetic signs on many of the pieces cannot be distinguished as either Phoenician or Aramaean. At least the category thus encloses both areas equally.

the existence of local centres of production for fine ivory and metal-work within North Syria now seems likely,[12] probability demands that one should not assume a vacuum in luxury production in Damascus.

Just such a question was raised not long ago by Barnett, with respect to a particular class of bronze bowls found among the now-famous hoard from the Northwest Palace at Nimrud (cf., for example, fig. 4).[13] This group is characterized by a distinctive star-pattern at the centre of the bowl. The outer registers, however, have been described as "partly 'Syrian', partly 'Phoenician' in style"; and several bear inscriptions of personal names in Aramaic. Therefore Barnett concluded that perhaps for the first time it might seem reasonable to speak of an "Aramaean" school of art.[14]

Some combination of "Phoenician" and what Barnett calls "Syrian" (i.e. North Syrian) elements is precisely what one would expect from Aram: in touch on the one hand with the inland centres to the north, and on the other, with the coastal plain of Phoenicia to the west. Unfortunately, the bowls do not fully resolve our problem, as the Phoenician and Syrian elements seem to occur independently on separate bowls around the basic central design, and this phenomenon has not yet been fully understood. However, if one were to project what an integrated "South Syrian" style *ought* to look like, one might well envisage some balance between the frontality, movement and fuller use of space of the North Syrian style, and the tendency toward egyptianizing elements, attention to detail and technical skill of the Phoenician. And indeed, this is precisely what we find on the uninscribed Syrian stele cited above: Phoenician-type egyptianizing winged sun-disc and headdress, in conjunction with a figure generally squat in proportion, whose outspread wings and arms occupy a large percentage of the available space in a quite un-Phoenician and more "Syrian" manner.[15]

---

[12] I. J. Winter, "Carved Ivory Furniture Panels from Nimrud: A Coherent Subgroup of the North Syrian Style", *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 11 (1976), 25–54.

[13] R. D. Barnett, "Layard's Nimrud Bronzes and their Inscriptions", *Eretz Israel* 8 (1967), 1–7.

[14] Ibid., 5.

[15] Cf. Winter, *Iraq* 38, 7, 11.

Arslan Tash

To move from the conjectural to the concrete as far as ivories are concerned, let us now begin to examine some of the actual pieces preserved. Traditionally, the one assemblage associated with Damascus is the collection found by Thureau-Dangin in 1928 at Arslan Tash, some 20 miles to the east of Carchemish in *North* Syria.[16] The connection to Damascus is based upon the presence of an undecorated and fragmentary ivory label which bears an inscription including the words, "…to our lord Hazael…"—name of a known king of Damascus of the later ninth century (*c.* 841–805 B.C.).[17] It is assumed that this label speaks also for the collection of decorated plaques found in and near the same room; and that therefore the piece or pieces of furniture which they once decorated must have come from Damascus.[18]

The published collection consists of some 112 pieces, but many of them are repeated motifs that clearly belonged to the same original object.[19] One of the largest groups consists of plaques carved in low relief with representations of two-winged men in egyptianizing double crowns opposite a figure of the infant Horus seated on a lotus

---

[16] F. Thureau-Dangin, *et al.*, *Arslan Tash*, Paris, 1931 (henceforth, *AT*).

[17] *AT, Atlas*, Pl. XLVII: 112 = *KAI*, no. 232. It is interesting to note that another fragment of ivory veneer inscribed with the name of Hazael has been found in Room T10 of Fort Shalmaneser at Nimrud, along with shell clappers inscribed with the name of Irhuleni, ruler of Hamath, another ninth century king. M. Mallowan, *Nimrud and its Remains*, Vol. II, New York, 1966 (henceforth, *NR II*), 452.

[18] *AT, Text*, p. 140. R. D. Barnett subsequently suggested that while coming from Damascus, they were likely to have been manufactured by Phoenicians, and brought by tributaries of Damascus to their overlord. ("Nimrud Ivories and the Art of the Phoenicians", *Iraq* 2 (1935), 184).

[19] In addition, six pieces are currently in the collection of the École Biblique in Jerusalem, and although they all reproduce motifs and types from the published assemblage, they themselves are not included in the publication (my thanks to Jean-Baptiste Humber, curator of the collection, and to Agnès Spycket, Musée du Louvre, who will publish them, for permission to refer to the ivories here). It would also appear that a number (about 40) of pieces purchased in 1970–72 by the Badischen Landesmuseums, Karlsruhe (cf. J. Thimme, *Phönizische Elfenbeine: Möbelverzierungen des 9. Jahrhunderts v. Chr.*, Karlsruhe, 1973) belong to the same stylistic and iconographic group, as do ivories in the Borowski Collection recently given to the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto (cf. O. W. Muscarella, editor, *Ladders to Heaven* (Toronto, 1981), nos. 243–262). They have all been attributed to Arslan Tash, but the history of these pieces backwards from the collections to their source is not clear, and one must at least query whether they be of the same *place* of manufacture originally, but in fact discovered at another site and attributed to Arslan Tash? Cf. on this, review of Thimme by R. D. Barnett in the *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 95 (1975), 287–8.

(e.g. figs. 5 and 7).[20] This is a well-known motif that seems to have passed from Egypt to Phoenicia sometime in the very early first millennium.[21] The flanking figures can also sometimes be female, related to the original Egyptian duo of Isis and Nephthys as protective goddesses,[22] and indeed, in this same series are 5 plaque fragments of winged women opposite a central tree (fig. 9).[23] All are of the same size, and must have been from the same piece of furniture. The basic motifs conform well to Phoenician taste for symmetry within the single plaque.[24] Also Phoenician is the Egyptian wig on the women and the double crown on the male figures, as well as the attempt to render the collar as a necklace with counterweights.

However, differences from classical Phoenician works are seen in the frilled borders of the garments, which could just be the peculiarity of an individual hand or workshop, and yet their prominence is quite unlike other known Phoenician examples. Also, in the male garments, no kilt is visible beneath the edge of the long open skirt, the rest being hidden by the forward wing; and this, too, is unusual in pieces usually described as Phoenician.[25] More important is the relatively squat proportions of the figures. The head is large with respect to the rest of the body, to a ratio of 1:3½, whereas with most "classical" Phoenician standing figures, the heads are consistently in a ratio of 1:5 for the rest of the body (compare, for example, figs. 5 and 6).[26] Finally, the way in which the motif fills the whole plaque is significant: lower wings meet in the centre, while the upper wings touch the upper edge of the border, and their curved ends seem almost the result of pressing against the frame—qualities typical of North Syrian rather than Phoenician art.

---

[20] *AT, Atlas*, Pls. XIX: I–XXIV: 13 (and Thimme, *Phönizische Elfenbeine*, p. XVII: K and no. 11).

[21] This observation is based upon work done by Richard Fazzini, of the Egyptian Department of the Brooklyn Museum, as a seminar report for the Institute of Fine Arts, New York, in the Spring of 1968.

[22] Cf. Barnett, *CNI*, 140–141.

[23] *AT, Atlas*, Pls. XXIV: 15 and XXV: 19 (also, Thimme, *Phönizische Elfenbeine*, nos. 8–10).

[24] Cf., e.g., *NR II*, fig. 481; and Winter, *Iraq* 38, 6.

[25] Compare to *NR II*, figs. 455, 481, 493 for example.

[26] Cf. *NR II*, 454: inlaid griffin-slayer (1:5 along diagonal leg, 1:4½ on a straight line between the legs; fig. 474: silhouette inlay piece of two winged grasping plants (1:5); fig. 485: *à jour* relief plaque of a griffin-slayer (1:5); fig. 493: inlay plaque of two winged males with plants (1:5).

The same proportions are apparent in the 5 plaques of winged females, as well as on two additional pieces showing youths binding the stalks of papyrus plants, above which sits the Egyptian figure of Ma'at (fig. 11).[27] The way in which the fringes of the youths' kilts and overgarments curve in conformation with the movement of the legs and shoulders is likewise not generally characteristic of Phoenician work, and interestingly, these very same curves are found in the garment of the four-winged genius on the basalt stele from Syria cited above (fig. 3).

Another group which includes traditional Phoenician iconography in squat, "un-Phoenician" proportions consists of four fragments of scenes in which male attendants or worshippers stand before a winged uraeus-serpent.[28] The overall size of the plaques is smaller than the winged group just discussed, the borders are less regular, and the carving in general seems cruder (cf. hands, wings); yet here again, the ratio of head to body is 1:3½, not the standard Phoenician 1:5. The garment worn by some of these figures—a tunic with long flap from the hem around the back leg to connect on a diagonal with the front hem—is the same as that worn by the deity on the Melqart stele of Bar-Hadad (fig. 2).

The presence of figures carrying ram-headed sceptres and long-necked pitchers before the uraei raises a point of iconography. Clearly, whatever the significance may have been, this combination of attributes constitutes a standard formula, for the same elements are represented on other ivory plaques from Nimrud: one from Room SW7 at Fort Shalmaneser, where a figure wearing an *'Atef* crown carries the same objects (a palmette plant issuing from the mouth of the jug); the other a piece from Room SW12 in the Fort, on which the pitcher and sceptre are held by two men in double crowns opposite a central tree.[29] As we have suggested previously,[30] divisions into groups cannot be done entirely on the basis of iconography, as there seems to have been a common pool of motives and themes in the ninth-eighth centuries B.C. shared by most of the Levantine cultures, who similarly shared many cultural and religious traditions. Therefore the means of distinguishing between art works would have to be not on the presence of motives so much

---

[27] *AT, Atlas*, Pls. XXVI: 20–21.
[28] Ibid., Pl. XXXIII: 39–42.
[29] *NR II*, figs. 412 and 481.
[30] *Iraq* 38, 4–11.

as in aspects of style: the use of space and proportion, the repetition
of certain details, etc. So that even figures carrying ram-sceptres and
pitchers at Arslan Tash are not automatically of the Phoenician school
if the proportion of the bodies, details of clothing and relative size of
the sceptres differ significantly from other known Phoenician works.

An intact *à jour* plaque some 20 cm in length showing winged ram-
headed sphinxes opposite a central tree (fig. 28), and the various frag-
ments of both ram- and human-headed sphinxes which clearly belong
to the same group (fig. 31),[31] all conform more readily to the Phoenician
canon of space and proportion—although the simplified patterns on
bib and shoulder and the curving wings might be seen as consistent
variations. These sphinxes thus raise the question of the homogene-
ity of the Arslan Tash assemblage, and whether indeed it would be
appropriate to demand homogeneity of it.

With ivory as highly valued as it was in antiquity, as witnessed
by Assyrian accounts, it would not be untoward to assume that the
commodity played an important role in diplomatic gift-giving as well
as in booty. So that even if the Arslan Tash collection actually was
gathered only from Damascus, in accordance with the Haza'el label,
and if the winged human figures described do represent Damascene
work, not merely a variant local "Phoenician" workshop, it is still not
impossible that the assemblage there could also include pieces actually
manufactured in Phoenicia. However, it is also possible that within
Damascus itself there may have been several workshops demonstrat-
ing different degrees of fidelity to Phoenician models, as we have tried
to show elsewhere for North Syrian centres of manufacture.[32] In the
present case, even for the "typically Phoenician pieces," not only are
the curving wings and simplified patterns on bib and shoulder consis-
tent variations from Phoenician examples, but also other details, like
the pronounced genitalia on the Arslan Tash sphinxes, are not at all
typical of known Phoenician works,[33] while they *are* characteristic of
the generally Phoenician proportions of the sphinx relief found in
Damascus (fig. 1). As W. Ll. Brown noted in his review of Barnett's
publication of the Nimrud Ivories some years ago,[34] it is always these
borderline cases which present the greatest difficulties, and while we

---

[31] *AT, Atlas*, Pls. XXVII: 22–XXXI: 31.
[32] *MMJ* 11, 53.
[33] E.g., *NR II*, fig. 504.
[34] *PEQ*, 1958, 65–69.

are in the process of defining classes of objects, it is perhaps best to comment on those works which best exemplify the categories; but it must also be recognized that products of human activity do not always fall into neatly definable taxonomies.

A quite distinct set of three *à jour* sphinx plaques from Arslan Tash conforms more to the hypothetical outline of what a South Syrian work might be (see, e.g. fig. 32).[35] The heads of the sphinxes are turned outward, so that faces and collars confront the viewer. While they wear the "Phoenician" bib and collar, in the turned heads, the shortened and somewhat grossly defined wings and heavy paws, these sphinxes seem rather a cross between Phoenician and North Syrian types.[36] The same "Syrian" connection is visible in a relief plaque of a standing male figure, his body in profile, the head and shoulders seen frontally (fig. 14). The man is flanked by twisted tendrils of two lotus plants, most reminiscent of examples in the North Syrian sub-group of ivories from Room SW7 in Fort Shalmaneser (for example, fig. 15), while the simplified form of the lotus as well as the man's deep-set eyes are likewise similar to Syrian works.[37]

The several plaques of a cow and a suckling calf from Arslan Tash, which include at least 12 examples in *à jour* relief and 7 in high relief on a solid ground,[38] have long been taken as typical of Phoenician work (cf. figs. 16 and 17). The motif itself seems to have appeared first in the second millennium in the Aegean, where faience relief plaques from Knossos are dated to Middle Minoan III, and in Middle Kingdom tomb paintings from Beni Hasan in Egypt.[39] It appears on several "Phoenician" bowls from Cyprus and Etruria,[40] in each case with the scene occurring against a background of papyrus plants on long stems. A very similar representation occurs on an ivory from Nimrud, a

---

[35] *AT, Atlas*, Pl. XXXI: 32–34.

[36] Compare with both types, *NR II*, figs. 465 and 504.

[37] Cf. *AT, Atlas*, Pl. XXXIII: 43//for example, M. Mallowan and G. Herrmann, *Furniture from SW7, Fort Shalmaneser* (*Ivories from Nimrud, 1949–1963, Fasc. III*) Aberdeen, 1974 (henceforth, *SW7*), no. 2.

[38] *AT, Atlas*, Pls. XXXVII: 63–XLII: 83; École Biblique nos 28.5 and 28.6; Thimme, *Phönizische Elfenbeine*, nos. 23, 24, 28. In addition, pieces in the Borowski Collection (see fn. 19 above), include nos. 245–250.

[39] H. T. Bossert, *Altkreta*, Berlin, 1923, figs. 82–83; W. Guglielmi, *Reden, Rufe und Lieder auf altägyptische Darstellungen der Landwirtschaft, Viehzucht, des Fisch- und Vogelfangs von Mittleren Reich bis zur Spätzeit*, Bonn, 1973, Pl. vi—bottom, from Tomb 15 at Beni Hasan.

[40] Cf. E. Gjerstad, "Decorated Metal Bowls From Cyprus", *Op. Arch. VI* (1946), Pl. XI; and Poulsen, *Die Orient*, fig. 18.

plaque in low relief with inlaid stalks of papyrus and lotus buds behind the animals, the calf kneeling to suckle and the cow looking straight ahead, just as on the bowls (fig. 18).[41] A second ivory plaque, in modelled *à jour* relief, also includes the papyrus plants behind the animals; but unlike the bronzes, the mother turns her head back to lick the calf while the calf crouches but does not kneel (fig. 19) and the same gesture is seen on a carved plaque with papyrus stalks at right and left, positioned rather like the twisted blossoms on plaques from Arslan Tash (see fig. 20). The proportion of the cow's body is much more elongated and the lines more fluid in the first piece, but the papyrus background unites these ivories with the Phoenician work in metal. In the Arslan Tash group, no plant background is provided. All of the cows turn their heads back, and the calves crouch without kneeling. The striations on the cows' necks and the frilled dewlaps of the calves are characteristic details in both the cut-out and the relief pieces.[42] The *à jour* plaques seem better executed—in the modelling, in the greater movement of the nursing calves, and in particular in the handling of the complex spatial problem posed by the turning of the cows' heads which then overlap with their bodies;[43] yet it is on the relief pieces that we see tightly twisted tendril-plants at right and left reminiscent of those flanking the frontal man discussed above, and where also the cows' bodies seem almost too large for the frame— all traits which not only link these plaques to the larger group from Arslan Tash slowly being defined, but also to tendencies that are more "Syrian" than "Phoenician".[44]

  Despite minor variations therefore in the plaques from Arslan Tash, I would not suggest separating the relief from the cut-out examples, for variations in the handling of the same motif can also be the result of differences in hands or workshops within the same place, as noted above. The representations of the suckling-calf motif on the Phoenician bowls and on some of the ivory pieces from Nimrud, on the other hand—where the papyrus stalks become the device by which the cow's body does not press against the upper edge of the plaque, but rather becomes the middle ground horizontally—is far more in keeping with the Phoenician predilection for balance in composition than are those

---

[41] *NR II,* fig. 514, from Room SW37, Fort Shalmaneser.
[42] Ibid., fig. 425, from SW2, Fort Shalmaneser.
[43] Compare, e.g., *AT, Atlas,* Pls. XXXVII: 63 and XXXIX: 71 with XLI: 77.
[44] Ibid., Pls. XLI: 75 // XXXIII: 43.

in which the animals alone fill the entire plaque. It is possible, therefore, that the Arslan Tash group represents a South Syrian variation on this shared motif—one which may go back not only in visual imagery to the second millennium, but also in meaning, if one thinks of the text from Ras Shamra referring to Anath as the "cow, suckler of the young bull calf of Baal".[45] In any event, that the motif would not have been confined to a single ethnic or cultural group by the first millennium seems evident from the recent finds of painted graffiti—including a nursing cow and calf—on ninth-eighth century pottery from the site of Kuntilat Ajrud in the Negev near the border of eastern Sinai.[46]

Also with roots in the second millennium is the representation of the voluted tree,[47] as seen on ivories from Megiddo, Fakhariyeh and Ras Shamra.[48] The "sacred tree" of the second millennium consists of one or at most two registers of volutes with a tall crown of palm leaves. This tradition seems to be followed in Phoenician representations of the tree in the early first millennium as well, where although the volutes become more stylized and the lotus-like umbel and crown of leaves less pronounced, the trees retain their basic organization into only one or two registers, whether occurring between flanking figures or alone on a single plaque.[49] It is in the North Syrian representations of the tree in the first millennium that the volutes are further elaborated into four or even six registers—particularly where they stand as end-plaques to

[45] A. Caquot, M. Sznycer, and A. Herdner, *Textes Ougaritiques, Tome I: Mythes et Légendes*, Paris, 1974, 288–9. As will be noted below, p. 118, there are some plaques with this motif from Nimrud, particularly from Fort Shalmaneser Rooms N21 and SW37, which are clearly a part of the Arslan Tash group. And then there are pieces which raise questions of "boundaries" for stylistic groups, as it includes straight stems of papyrus blossoms flanking the animals instead of twisted tendrils—thus linking it with the Phoenician bowls and ivories from Nimrud, and yet while the animal bodies press neither against each other nor really against the borders, the cow does touch the upper border as in the more "Syrian" pieces (cf. fig. 20, from Fort Shalmaneser, Rm. SW 11–12 currently in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, unpublished). I raise the question here without being able to provide a simple answer of where to draw lines between intra- and intersite variability.

[46] Z. Meshel, "Kuntilat 'Ajrud—An Israelite Site on the Sinai Border", *Qadmoniot* IX: 4 (1976), 119–124 (in Hebrew) and Pl. 3. A more complete publication is currently being prepared by Dr. Pirhiya Beck, Tel Aviv University.

[47] *AT, Atlas*, Pl. XLV: 97, 98.

[48] G. Loud, *The Megiddo Ivories* (O.I.P. 52), Chicago, 1939, Pls. 6: 14 and 35: 167; D. McEwan *et al.*, *Soundings at Tell Fakhariyeh* (O.I.P. 79), Chicago, 1956, Pls. 59–61; and W. Ward, "La Déesse nourricière d'Ugarit", *Syria* 46 (1969), figs. 3 and 4, for the best photographs of the complete panels of the Ras Shamra bed, including the side plaques.

[49] Cf. *NR II*, figs. 467, 481, 506 and 508.

a larger figured panel.[50] The multi-registered volute trees executed as individual plaques in the Arslan Tash collection fall directly between the two traditions; their floral buds issuing from the volutes and the reduced crown are typical of Phoenician examples, while the several registers and deeper volutes relate more to comparable examples from North Syria.

Finally, there are several plaques in the Arslan Tash assemblage executed not in relief but by incision. Three of these are fragments, probably once part of the same narrow frieze, showing a garland of buds and lotus-blossoms; a fourth is a fragment of a winged uraeus-disc (fig. 37).[51] The bud and lotus garland is a well-known motif in both Phoenician and North Syrian art, occurring on the tenth-century sarcophagus of Ahiram as well as in later works;[52] and the uraeus-disc is a standard adaptation of the Phoenician, as opposed to the Syrian, sun-disc.[53] However the interior pattern of the disc itself, with an eight-pointed star around a smaller central circle, and additional tiny circles set in the interstices between each point, is precisely the "star-pattern" seen at the centre of the bronze bowls from Nimrud identified by Barnett with Aramaean work, and unique in comparison with other representations of the Phoenician uraeus-disc.[54]

What distinguishes all of the incised fragments, in addition to their technique, is that a red stain has been applied to parts of the design so that alternating petals and alternating wing-segments are picked out in colour.[55] Significantly enough, this method is also employed on a series of spade-shaped ivory horse-blinkers found in Room SW37 of Fort Shalmaneser, on which a female sphinx is seen walking towards the outer edge: the body in profile but the head and decorated collar turned frontally (fig. 38).[56] A comparison of these sphinxes with the frontally-faced sphinxes of the Arslan Tash plaques (fig. 32) is striking (with their extended wings, one front, the other back, as well as their

---

[50] E.g., *SW7*, nos. 89–91.

[51] *AT, Atlas*, Pls. XLVI: 105–107 and 104, respectively.

[52] Cf. E. Porada, "Notes on the Sarcophagus of Ahiram", *JANES* 5 (1973), Pls. 1 *a* and 1 *b*.

[53] Winter, *Iraq* 38, 4–5.

[54] Barnett, *Eretz Israel* 8, Pl. IV: 1; and A. H. Layard, *A Second Series of the Monuments of Nineveh*, London, 1853 (henceforth, *MN* II), Pl. 61.

[55] Crowfoot, *S–S II*, 41, reports that also four fragments of incised guilloche design from Arslan Tash were stained (with reference to *AT, Atlas*, Pl. XLVII: 108–111).

[56] J. J. Orchard, *Equestrian Bridle-Harness Ornaments* (*Ivories From Nimrud 1949–1963*), *Fasc. I, Part 2*), Aberdeen, 1967, nos. 109–114.

frontal collars and faces). The way in which the sphinx's body on the blinkers violates the space of the centre as it reaches out to the very edges of the border with feet, tail and wings is definitely not a Phoenician characteristic.[57] These blinkers then unite the technique and the style of pieces from Arslan Tash, while themselves standing apart from classic Phoenician works, and thus illustrate well the hypothetical qualities projected for a "South Syrian" style.

Slowly, therefore, through the interlocking characteristics of the Arslan Tash group with other works, there are beginning to emerge certain recurring elements and tendencies which *may* support a claim for a South Syrian or Damascene origin of the collection. As we shall see, the argument can be further strengthened by an investigation of other ivory assemblages which contain pieces related to those from Arslan Tash.

Samaria

The collection which has most often been linked to Arslan Tash is that of Samaria. Four small fragments from the site, found by the joint expedition headed by Harvard University from 1931–33, were published by Reisner; an additional 197 fragments by J. W. and G. M. Crowfoot as part of the continued excavations under the auspices of the British School of Archaeology in Jerusalem and the Palestine Exploration Fund in 1935.[58] The Crowfoots reported that some 500 fragments were found in all, so that what has been published, while surely all of the major pieces, is still only 40% of the total assemblage.[59]

Although differences in technique and subject matter were noted among many of the pieces in the assemblage, it was felt that the collection was essentially homogeneous.[60] However, even before the final

---

[57] Cf. a typical "Phoenician" spade-shaped blinker, ibid., no. 116, and the discussion of Phoenician use of space in *Iraq* 38, 7ff.

[58] Reisner, *HE I*, 28 (catalogue of bone and ivory objects), and 93–122 (*Excavations of the Israelite Period*); and Crowfoot and Crowfoot, *S–S II, passim.*

[59] Dozens of unpublished fragments still in original excavation boxes are currently housed in the Institute of Archaeology, Hebrew University, Jerusalem, where I was generously permitted to study them in June 1979. All were essentially duplicated by published material.

[60] *S–S II*, 49.

publication of the Samaria ivories, Watzinger divided the collection into two main groups—a scheme more recently followed by Avigad.[61]

On the one hand are those pieces characterized by inlay technique and strict reliance upon Egyptian motifs; on the other, those executed in relief and more "Asiatic" in aspect. While I would essentially agree with this division, it is my feeling that the inlaid ivories should be further subdivided into two groups. The first shows a great deal of modelling in relief of the ivory itself, despite the inclusion of inlay (cf. figs. 22 and 23). Figures, for example, are always indicated through modelling, and the inlay pieces are quite small, fitting into narrow troughs with raised edges and forming a small part of the figure—a general class of inlaid ivories well-known also from Nimrud and elsewhere.[62] It is in this group that we find motifs heavily dependent upon Egypt but often clothed in Levantine garments and associated with "Phoenician" plants, as noted by Crowfoot.[63] In contrast, pieces of the second inlay group (of which six related examples have now been published from Nimrud as well)[64] are generally smaller in overall size, but the proportionate amount of inlay is far greater (figs. 24, 25, and 26). There is no modelling done in the ivory; no raised borders to the troughs; and the figures would be better described as "excised." In other words, entire segments of the figures, like a stencil, were cut out to receive the inlay—several fragments of which, in red and blue glass, have been found.[65]

It is perhaps more convenient to refer to this second type as comprising the "silhouette"-inlay group. The motifs are even more strictly Egyptian, including that of a king wearing an accurately proportioned double-crown and smiting a crouching enemy, a hawk-headed sphinx with *'Atef* crown, and a royal sphinx treading on a fallen figure. Not only is the style of these figures closer to actual Egyptian models than any

---

[61] C. K. Watzinger, *Denkmäler Palästinas I*, Leipzig, 1933, 112–114; N. Avigad, "The Ivory House that Ahab Built", in *Eretz Shomron*, ed. Y. Aviram, Jerusalem, 1974, 75–85 (in Hebrew).

[62] E.g., *S–S II*, Pls. I–III, IV: 1, VII: 1, 13, 14, etc.; and *CNI*, C. 44, G.7, C. 48–55, D.9; *NR II* figs. 427, 434, 455, 466, 477, 493, 513, 527, etc.

[63] *S–S II* 14, 16.

[64] Ibid., Pls. XIV–XV // *NR II*, figs. 474–5, 500 and 502; and R. D. Barnett, "A Review of Acquisitions…", *BMQ* 27 (1963), Pl. XXXIV: d.

[65] *S–S II*, Frontispiece and Pl. XXIV: 11. On examination of fragments in the Institute of Archaeology, Jerusalem, it was interesting to note that the ivory in this group is more highly polished than other types, the cutting contributing to a suggestion that this is a group apart from the "partial" inlays of established Phoenician type. Other fragments are said to be housed in the Palestine Exploration Fund in London.

of the previously discussed "Phoenician" representations, but also the technique is one known so far only in Egypt (cf. for example a portion of a silhouette inlay face in red jasper, dated to Dynasty XVIII–XIX, and currently in the Schimmel Collection).[66] In the absence of any material from Egypt of this period, I would only suggest that we cannot ignore the possibility that fine decorative ivory work was being produced there at the same time, using motifs such as those represented on the Temple of Khons at Karnak, which seems to have been a source for some of the Phoenician adaptations as well;[67] and that if Egypt is not the place of origin of such works as represented in this second group of inlaid ivories, then we should look only to some centre in *very* close touch with Egyptian traditions historically and artistically—such as Byblos[68]—for their manufacture.

Be that as it may, it is essentially in the relief group from Samaria that all of the parallels to the Arslan Tash collection lie. For certain of the parallels, such as the "woman at the window" motif, not enough is known of the variations within the group to argue that some *must* belong to a South Syrian group. The general type is usually considered to be Phoenician.[69] To create sub-groups, far more extensive analyses of facial types and hair-styles is called for, using all female heads—in the round as well as in relief—a project beyond the scope of the present study. However, the existence of the motif at both Samaria and Arslan Tash[70] serves to link the two assemblages. While most accounts refer only to the small and relatively crude example of the single woman at the balustraded window illustrated from Samaria, which is far less detailed than the larger examples from Arslan Tash (e.g. fig. 36), Crowfoot actually does mention the existence of several fragments of

---

[66] O. W. Muscarella, ed., *Ancient Art: The Norbert Schimmel Collection*, Mainz, 1974, no. 208. Other New Kingdom Egyptian glass inlay pieces have been published by J. D. Cooney, *Catalogue of Egyptian Art in the British Museum IV: Glass*, London, 1976, especially 73–88.

[67] I am grateful to David Silverman for the information that the Temple will eventually be fully published by Professor Edward Wente of the Oriental Institute, University of Chicago.

[68] Cf. "The Report of Wen-Amon", W. K. Simpson, R. O. Faulkner and E. F. Wente, Jr., *The Literature of Ancient Egypt*, New Haven and London, 1972, 143–155, and especially 149–151, regarding material relations between the two at the end of the Late Bronze Age.

[69] Cf. R. D. Barnett, "Phoenicia and the Ivory Trade", *Archaeology* 9 (1956), discussion 94–97.

[70] *S–S II*, Pl. XIII: 2 // *AT, Atlas*, Pls. XXXIV: 45–XXVI: 60.

the same motif nearer in size to that of Arslan Tash, and illustrates a drawing of one with an identical balustrade.[71]

With other motifs, such as the pairs of opposed winged genii, the finds from Samaria again attest to the existence of parallel themes, albeit existing only in fragments. One such fragment includes the representation of a male figure in long open skirt, with two outstretched wings flaring into the centre. It seems identical, to counterparts from Arslan Tash, even to the blossom grasped in each hand (cf. figs. 7 and 8).[72] The work on the Samaria fragment seems perhaps finer than the Arslan Tash pieces,[73] with the well modelled wing-segments executed as true feathers rather than as geometric compartments between double lines. Still, there is another small fragment, consisting of part of the right arm and upper wing of a left-hand figure,[74] which seems identical with the Arslan Tash plaques in proportion and execution, and could virtually be overlaid upon a photograph of the latter.[75]

This sort of overlay is exactly what has been done with the several fragments of an *à jour* panel showing a pair of ram-headed sphinxes opposite a central tree.[76] The dozen or so fragments on their own do not make a whole picture, but set over the drawing of the complete plaque from Arslan Tash, and excepting minor differences like the slightly higher double crown on the Samaria fragment and the slightly more square wing-segments on the belly, the two fit exactly and are virtually identical (cf. figs. 28 and 29).

One large fragment of the body of a winged sphinx would, if complete, be at least 20 cm long, or twice as large as any other piece from Samaria or Arslan Tash.[77] Nonetheless, the angle of wing, division of

---

[71] *S–S II*, 29 and fig. 4.

[72] Cf. *S–S II*, Pl. IX: 3 and 5.

[73] Compare with, e.g., *AT, Atlas*, Pl. XIX.

[74] *S–S II*, Pl. IV: 4, turned incorrectly in the published photograph; it should be rotated 45 degrees from east to northeast.

[75] Cf. especially *AT, Atlas*, Pl. XXIII: 12.

[76] *S–S II*, Pl. VI: 2.

[77] Ibid., 20 and Pl. VI: 1. Several fragments of a large volute-tree might belong here. Based upon the drawing presented by Crowfoot rather than the actual fragments (ibid., Pl. XXII: 1 and 1 *a*), the volute has been discussed as an independent element and called a representation of a proto-Aeolic capital, linked to architectural capitals found at Ramat Rahel, Hazor, Jerusalem and elsewhere in Palestine (cf. Y. Shiloh, "The Proto-Aeolic Capital—The Israelite 'Timorah' (Palmette) Capital", *PEQ*, 1977, 39–52 for the architectural type, and Avigad, *Eretz Shomron*, 79 for the ivory). What Avigad calls the upper platform, or abacus, could as well be the remains of the upper edge of the plaque, or the date-shoots that often issue from the top of a volute, the

segments by narrow raised frets, and line of body are the same as the ram-headed sphinxes and the entire collection of sphinxes from Arslan Tash.[78] Several human-headed sphinxes from Samaria also find their parallels in the Arslan Tash collection (e.g. fig. 31), where rams and sphinxes alike share many details, such as the herring-bone pattern of the bib and the representation of the shoulder ornament (which is actually the semi-circular collar seen in profile), and the double crown.[79] The headcloth, which is rendered on some of the sphinxes not with the usual diagonal bands, but with vertical striations and ends with a curl at the back, is also seen on several of the ram-sphinxes from Arslan Tash.[80]

The one piece which stands slightly apart from the rest of this collection of mythological creatures is the *à jour* trapezoidal plaque of a sphinx in a lotus thicket (fig. 30),[81] where the lower part of the crown is misunderstood and given parallel hatched lines as decoration, and the patterning on the shoulder is not indicated at all. The bib, too, is different, rendered as gouged vertical flutes with a beaded border, and this same beaded edging separates the angular shoulder from the springing of the wing feathers. Parallel lines mark the rib-cage, using surface indicators of musculature rather than volume—a trait more characteristic of Syrian work than Phoenician; and the proportionately large head and shoulder, with relatively reduced hind quarters, as well as a prominent thrust to the face in profile, are also generally associated with the Syrian style. This plaque therefore raises the possibility of a craftsman working perhaps in the Phoenician manner—as this sphinx is really in the same tradition as its companions—but one ineluctably schooled in Syrian modes of perception and execution;[82] and, whatever the origin of the other ram- and human-headed sphinx plaques may have been, leads us to suspect that here we are in the presence of hybrid and possibly South Syrian work. It should be noted that the schematic way in which the cusps and petals of the lotus flowers are indicated,

---

arms of which then being simply part of a large floral element. The size of the piece further corresponds well with the scale of the sphinxes, as it measures some 15 cm across, and would be in exactly the correct proportion for a large frieze including the 20-cm long winged creatures.

[78] E.g., *AT, Atlas*, Pl. XXXIX: 26.
[79] Cf. *S–S II*, Pl. V: 1–3 // *AT, Atlas*, Pls. XXX: 29–XXXI: 31.
[80] E.g., *S–S II*, Pl. VI: 1, 2 // *AT, Atlas*, Pl. XXVIII: 25.
[81] *S–S II*, Pl. V: 1.
[82] Cf., e.g., *CNI*, S. 1, S. 6, S. 13, etc.

by parallel incised lines rather than by modelling, also calls to mind the plants flanking the frontal man from Arslan Tash.[83]

While no exact parallels to the Arslan Tash frontal-faced sphinxes exist at Samaria, a small fragment of a frontal collar was found by the Harvard Expedition, which shows the same general decoration as those worn by the sphinxes.[84] The crown at the top of the fragment and two pierced holes in the centre suggest perhaps a Bes or animal-head surmounting it—especially since such a collar is seen among the egyptianizing designs of the "Aramaean" group of bronze bowls referred to above, often topped with the ibis-head of the Egyptian god Thoth.[85]

The animal combats of Samaria (e.g. fig. 27) likewise have no direct parallels with Arslan Tash. The greater movement in these pieces and the more precise hatched feathering of the wings, as well as the curved and patterned shoulder fragment of a griffin,[86] call to mind the winged sphinx or griffin of the Hama ivories,[87] and such combats are indeed more typical of the North Syrian style.[88] For the fairly crudely blocked-out *à jour* fragment of a lion and bull combat, with little or no modelling or surface design, the inlaid eye and open mouth are in fact very close to the cruder group of cow and calf plaques from Arslan Tash.[89] The protruding tongue of the bull in a more elaborate, trapezoidally-shaped combat plaque from Samaria calls to mind the similar detail on the plaques showing grazing stags from Arslan Tash,[90] and for these latter, there is a clear parallel in motif as well at Samaria.[91]

One small fragment in relief of a file of grazing stags is published, in which we see the head and foreleg of one animal behind the tail and hind leg of another; additional fragments of the same frieze are cited by Crowfoot.[92] While it is the same motif as the two plaques found at Arslan Tash, only one of the Arslan Tash pieces is in relief; the other is cut out, and both of the Arslan Tash fragments are better modelled

---

[83] *AT, Atlas*, Pl. XXXIII: 43.

[84] *HE II*, Pl. 66 *h*.

[85] Cf. Layard, *MN II*, Pl. 59 E.

[86] *S–S II*, Pl. VIII: 1, 4.

[87] *CNI*, fig. 11; and P. J. Riis, *Sūkās I: The North-East Sanctuary*..., Copenhagen, 1970, fig. 59; for the position of the shoulder fragment in relation to the rest of the body, cf. *CNI*, S.57 a.

[88] *CNI*, S.60, S.73, and the S.1 fragment on Pl. XXV.

[89] Cf. *S–S II*, Pl. X: 2 // *AT, Atlas*, Pl. XLI: 75, especially.

[90] *S–S II*, Pl. X: 1 // *AT, Atlas*, Pl. XXXVI: 61 and 62.

[91] *S–S II*, Pl. X: 8 and drawing, 8 *a*.

[92] *S–S II*, 26.

and finer than the one from Samaria. So that, despite the similarity in subject, posture and details, they are not from an identical group. Still, it is important to note that grazing animals are a frequent motif on the "star-pattern" bowls from Nimrud.[93] They also figure prominently on one of the Nimrud ivories, on which a register of grazing animals is surmounted by the figure of a seated woman within a tripartite architectural frame identical with the frame used for the "woman at the window" scenes.[94] Further, the group of bronze bowls which includes grazing animals also uses as a constant motif stands of papyrus plants on long stems, or continuous friezes of papyrus, which also appear as decoration on three ivory plaques from Arslan Tash.[95] Therefore, again, we are brought around to the definition of a group of shared motifs, if not identical pieces, that includes both the "Aramaean" bowls and the two collections of Arslan Tash and Samaria ivories.

It is more difficult to integrate the fragments with floral elements into this group, because plants tend to become schematized and are so frequently employed in a variety of contexts. Nevertheless, we find evidence of the standard volute plant occurring in both collections,[96] and the tendency toward stacking elements is also reflected in both, including a panel of three vertically-arranged lotus blossoms from Arslan Tash and a panel of stacked palmette plants from Samaria.[97]

A series of *à jour* floral plaques, described as palmettes with drooping fronds, also links the two groups.[98] There is more variation at Samaria: although only 11 fragments have been published, more than 70 pieces were reported found, varying in size from 3.65 to 14.2 cm.[99] In addition, the fragmentary base of a single such plant had been found across the courtyard by the Harvard Expedition in an earlier season.[100] The published examples from Arslan Tash all belong to a single set. With their tenons for inset (presumably into furniture), and the squat proportions of the plant as a whole, they are closest to two examples

---

[93] Cf. Barnett, *Eretz Israel* 8, Pl. VI: 2; Layard, *MN II*, Pl. 61 A.

[94] *CNI*, S. 149 (= Barnett, *Eretz Israel* 8, Pl. V: 2).

[95] *AT, Atlas*, Pl. XLV: 101–103 // Layard, *MN II*, Pls. 57 E and 58 E.

[96] *AT, Atlas*, Pl. XLV: 97–98 // *S–S II*, Pl. XXI: 2 and XVII: 4, with the same treatment of edges and proportions of volute curls and arms.

[97] *AT, Atlas*, Pls. XLV: 100 // *S–S II*, Pl. XXI: 1.

[98] *AT, Atlas*, Pl. XLIV: 94–96 // *S–S II*, Pls. XVIII–XX.

[99] *S–S II*, 35. At least 20 of these are among the fragments in the collection of the Institute of Archaeology, Jerusalem.

[100] *HE II*, Pl. 66 *h*.

from Samaria which are also relatively squat—although the latter have
a chevron rather than three small palm-shoots at the top of the plant
and the upper and lower fronds are divided into three parts rather
than being represented as a solid mass (cf. figs. 40 and 41). Thanks to
recent finds from Nimrud, we now know that when these pieces belong
to a series, they were originally set in a continuous frieze, with frond-
tips touching, as originally reconstructed by Thureau-Dangin, while
the representation of a table on a relief from Karatepe indicates that
individual pieces can have been used singly.[101] The distinctive shape is
suggested to derive from Egyptian representations such as that on the
Tell Basta silver patera from the late New Kingdom.[102] However, the
type must also have had a local development in Syro-Palestine within
the period from the second half of the second millennium to the early
first, as certain of the plant forms from the Megiddo ivories seem to
be the logical and more explicit ancestors from which these more
schematic representations derive.[103] Whether or not we can contain the
entire corpus of "drooping palm" plaques in South Syria in the early
first millennium is highly questionable; certainly motifs on the Karatepe
reliefs at least seem indisputably Phoenician.[104]

Likewise the garland, as discussed above, is an almost omnipresent
motif in the decorative arts. Still, several fragments do exist at Samaria
to unite the two collections. The finest of the Samaria examples are
modelled, with the characteristic raised narrow outline around each
segment, as opposed to the incision at Arslan Tash, although the two
rather crudely incised fragments also do occur at Samaria.[105] More
significant are the differences in that the Arslan Tash petals are longer
and narrower, and the plant cusp indicated as a rounded base with
three-part undulating line at the top, while a simple tear-drop or tri-
angle marks those from Samaria. Nevertheless, it will be remembered
that the Arslan Tash garlands showed evidence of staining to pick
out the design, and a similar device has been noted at Samaria on a

---

[101] *NR II*, figs. 503, 572 and 580; *AT, Text*, 131, fig. 47; and for the Karatepe relief,
cf. W. Orthmann, *Untersuchungen zur späthethitischen Kunst*, Bonn 1971, Pl. 18d. This is
barely visible in the published photographs, but has been observed *in situ* by the pres-
ent author, and is discussed further in I. Winter "On The Problems of Karatepe: The
Reliefs and Their Context", *An. St.* 29 (1979), 115–152.
[102] *S–S II*, 39.
[103] Esp. Loud, *Megiddo Ivories*, Pl. 6: 14.
[104] Cf. *An. St.* 29, tr. 122, fn. 40.
[105] *S–S II*, Pl. XVI: 1, 2 and 7, and XVI: 5 and 6, resp.

plaque of rosettes, as well as on some guilloche fragments.[106] Finally, identical millefiore-technique small glass plaques have been found at both sites.[107]

To summarize, then, the two collections of Samaria and Arslan Tash are not identical; Samaria includes a series of inlaid pieces entirely absent from Arslan Tash. However, in comparing the relief plaques from the two sites, while there are some noticeable motifs—such as the nursing cow—that do not have exact counterparts, even these may have many points of shared features. Comparable elements in the two collections in fact exist in a range from almost identical pieces (i.e., the ram-sphinxes) and identical treatment of individual details (e.g., wings), to the shared motif with slightly different rendering (grazing stags, drooping palms) and similar conceptions in decorative tendencies (e.g., the stacking of floral elements and a tendency to squat proportions in human figures). Thus, half of the Samaria collection is strongly linked to Arslan Tash, and these in turn may be tied to the "Aramaean" bowls from Nimrud.[108]

---

[106] Ibid., Pl. XXI: 6 and 7.

[107] Ibid., Pl. XXIV: 2 // *AT, Atlas*, Pl. LVII: 113–117.

[108] I have purposely omitted here the several pieces of carved bone and ivory found at Hazor, although the site falls within the broad geographical range of southern Syria, and the objects found do seem to fit well with the group being established from Arslan Tash and Samaria. The first, an ivory pyxis carved with alternating kneeling male figures and winged sphinxes or griffins opposite a palmette plant (Y. Yadin, *et al., Hazor I*, Jerusalem, 1958, Pl. CLV, and discussion, pp. 41–43), is related in type to some of the North Syrian pyxides from Nimrud, but the proportions of the box itself are different, and the style of the figures is much more closely related to the Arslan Tash ivories of men opposite plants and to the head of the "South Syrian" sphinx from Samaria (cf. our fig.12 compared to figs. 11 and 30). The second, a bone handle showing a file of winged men grasping tendrils of volute plants (ibid., Pls. CL and CLI and discussion, p. 16), has the men wearing a yoked bib and kilt similar to some figures from Arslan Tash, and the squatter proportion of the figures is clearly "South Syrian" rather than Phoenician, as articulated above (compare our figs. 13a and b with figs. 5 and 6). On the third piece, an ivory cosmetic spoon (Yadin *et al., Hazor II*, Jerusalem, 1960, Pls. CLXVII–VIII and discussion, pp. 35–37), the crude female face at the back of the spoon is too damaged to place stylistically, but the stacked volute plant in three tiers fits in well with plant forms from both Arslan Tash and Samaria. All three carvings, therefore, fall into the confines of the South Syrian group as I have tried to define it, and are distinct from both Phoenician and North Syrian works. What I leave to further analysis is the question whether the pieces are sufficiently distinct also from the Arslan Tash—Samaria ivories to suggest perhaps a regional sub-group within the South Syrian style. Thus, while they aid in the creation of a general category, they do not help in the formulation of the primary group (on which problem, see further below, p. 129).

Khorsabad

The third collection of ivories with which both Arslan Tash and Samaria
have been compared is that excavated by the Oriental Institute at Dur-
Sharrukin/Khorsabad in Assyria. The Khorsabad ivories come from
two locations on the citadel: from Room 23 of the small palace called
Residence K, and from Room 13 of the Nabu Temple. Discovered
in Residence K were two small fragments of incised bud and lotus
garlands which share with the pieces from Arslan Tash not only the
identical border, proportions and three-part sepals, but also the stain
applied to accentuate the design.[109] A second incised plaque, also from
Residence K, shows a horizontal frieze of abbreviated volutes, and at
the point where two contiguous volute-arms meet, a crown of leaves
is superimposed to look like an independent palmette plant.[110] In the
elaboration of the meeting of the two independent elements, thereby
creating a third, the plaque can be related to two vertical strips from
Samaria, in which the superimposed abbreviated volutes alternate
like brickwork so that each one springs from the chevron and tangent
volutes of a pair below.[111]

   Also from Palace K come the remains of two vertical supports for
furniture in the round, consisting of a torus framed by narrow hori-
zontal bands, and topped by a circle of drooping palm fronds, which
therefore become a translation in the round of the two-dimensional
plaques described above (fig. 42).[112] Virtually identical fragments of
furniture supports come from Arslan Tash, which Thureau-Dangin
has associated with the bed-frame found in Room 14 of the "Bâtiment
aux ivoires" (fig. 43).[113] The design of these supports is reminiscent in
general of the balustrade supports that are part of the "woman at the
window" series of ivories from both Arslan Tash and Samaria.

   A large series of ivory plaques with this latter subject was found
also at Khorsabad, in the Nabu Temple. At least nine different plaques
are represented, each carved with the same attention to detail, same
balustrade, hair-style and frontlet-ornament worn by the women (e.g.,
fig. 35). The careful rendering of the three-part window-frame, each

---

[109] G. Loud and C. B. Altman, *Khorsabad II* (*O.I.P. 40*), Chicago, 1938 (henceforth,
Khor. II), Pl. 55: 58 and 59, and text, p. 97.
[110] Ibid., Pl. 55: 57.
[111] *S–S II*, Pl. XXI: 4 and 5.
[112] *Khor. II*, Pl. 56: 69–70.
[113] *AT, Atlas*, Pl. XLIV: 92 and 93, and *Text*, p. 90.

segment recessed and edged with a narrow raised band, is far better technically than any of the Arslan Tash pieces (cf. fig. 36). The same is true for the modelling of the balustrade, of the detailing of the frontlets, and of the cascade of hair-curls—producing an almost cockle-shell effect as opposed to the simple shingled hair of Arslan Tash. Only one other work duplicates this hair-do, and in even more careful attention to detail and the "life" in each curl, and that is the well-known female head called the "Mona Lisa" of Nimrud—the large ivory head which Mallowan has suggested may have been manufactured (from an African tusk because of its size) to the order of Sargon II.[114]

The facial physiognomy of the women in the window at Khorsabad resembles closely the features on a group of fifteen female sphinxes also from the site (cf. fig. 34).[115] These sphinxes are shown with head and collar turned frontally. Their simple shingled "Egyptian" wig parallels that of the Arslan Tash "woman at the window"; the execution of their bibs, collars and the proportion of their bodies and the associated plants are quite one with the ram- and human-headed sphinxes of both Arslan Tash and Samaria, although the frontal turn of their head recalls more the similar device employed on the separate group of three frontal sphinxes from Arslan Tash and the blinkers from Fort Shalmaneser (figs. 32 and 38). And finally, although the frontal faces of the Arslan Tash plaques seem broader and the features are not identical with their counterparts at Khorsabad, it is particularly significant that an unpublished example in the collection of the École Biblique in Jerusalem, with narrower face and more pointed chin and smiling mouth, as well as the more carefully executed balustrade and elaborate frontal ornament, provides an essential link between the Khorsabad group and that from Arslan Tash.[116]

Finally, at least three plaques of two-winged women in long skirts opposite a central plant have been preserved from the Nabu Temple at Khorsabad, which therefore join the Arslan Tash series and the fragment from Samaria (cf. figs. 9 and 10).[117] It is clear from an examination of the Khorsabad fragments alone that they were not done by a single hand; there is much variation in the size of heads in relation to body,

---

[114] *NR I*, fig. 71, from the well in Room NN of the Northwest Palace.
[115] *Khor. II*, Pls. 52: 42–54: 56.
[116] École Biblique no. 2.84 (meas. 8.7 × 7.7 × 0.7 cm).
[117] Cf. *Khor. II*, Pl. 52: 38–40 // esp. *AT, Atlas*, Pls. XXIV: 13–16 and XXV: 17–19.

in the shapes of noses, and in the size of the plants from one to the other. The garments worn by the women are slightly different from those of Arslan Tash: both are long skirts with a beaded hem, and both sets of wings are quite similar, as are the wigs and head-gear. However, the facial features in the Khorsabad group seem finer, and the upper part of the garment is not just a simple dress as at Arslan Tash, where the pronounced breasts are thus visible; but rather, at Khorsabad, the upper garment is a cape which folds over both the outer and inner arm and hides the bust. It is if anything reminiscent of the drapery of the outer garment worn by the men binding papyrus stalks in the same extended series of plaques from the north Syrian site.

In overall quantity, there are not many ivories from Khorsabad. What is clear, however, is that among those pieces which have been found, there are a large number of parallels with the Arslan Tash and Samaria group already established. None of the differences we have described seem to be other than of quality; and the similarities seem to be sufficient to suggest a common point of origin for all.

Nimrud

If one moves from Khorsabad to Nimrud, then one also sees a number of points of comparison between pieces found, both in the Northwest Palace originally built by Aššurnaṣirpal II, and in Fort Shalmaneser. With the far more vast collections of ivory from Nimrud, however, and the lack of homogeneity, it becomes more difficult to evaluate the significance of those individual pieces which are related to the Arslan Tash—Samaria—Khorsabad group. Therefore we shall not go into as much detail in describing the relevant pieces, but simply establish their existence and thereby broaden the criteria for recognition of the larger group we are presently attempting to define. The same principle will hold for the subsequent citation of ivories from Zincirli and Carchemish, discussed below.

In Rooms V–W of the Northwest Palace at Nimrud were found four complete plaques of the "woman at the window" motif, and three fragmentary heads, once part of the same theme; two additional examples have thus far been published from Fort Shalmaneser, Rooms NW15 and S10.[118] The four complete pieces from the Northwest Palace

---

[118] *CNI*, C. 12–20; *NR II*, figs. 429 and 555.

all are generally similar to one another in detail, including the frontal ornaments worn by each woman, and must have once been part of a set. The separate heads are quite distinct in coiffure, and the hair-do of one is most closely tied to the "Mona Lisa" and the Khorsabad group. The Fort Shalmaneser pieces are both cut *à jour* around each head and between the supports of the balustrade. They are nevertheless both quite different from each other, and to some extent different from the other members of the group discussed thus far, although the hair-style of the piece from S10, with its long vertical locks ending in corkscrew curls, is exactly parallel to the relief plaques from Arslan Tash. The presence of these plaques at Nimrud serves to reinforce what was noted earlier—that with an iconographic theme which clearly had cultural significance in the Levant at this time, there are likely to be repeated occasions on which, and several places in which, the theme will be repeated, so that for the present, where we have not yet established sufficiently fine stylistic criteria to distinguish such complex factors, it is impossible to tell whether differences imply aspects of time or place or independent hands or workshops within a single place and time.

The same holds true for the series of pairs of figures, winged or not, opposite some central element,[119] although one pair in the British Museum is almost identical to the series of youths binding papyrus stalks from Arslan Tash (fig. 11).[120] In addition, several of the small fragments of winged women from the Southeast Palace at Nimrud are almost doubles in fineness and scale to the small fragments from Samaria;[121] while the wrap-around skirt of the men in the third series of these plaques from Arslan Tash finds a parallel in the dress of a similarly-standing male on an ivory from Room NW21 of Fort Shalmaneser, both of which garments seem to be the same as the skirt worn by the figure on the Melqart stele of Bar-Hadad (fig. 2).[122]

Many examples of human- and ram-headed sphinxes from Nimrud belong to the same family as the more egyptianizing or "Phoenician" animals from Samaria and Arslan Tash, and the related frontal-face sphinxes from Khorsabad (fig. 33).[123] One piece in particular is

---

[119] *CNI*, C. 10, G. 1; *NR I*, figs. 179–181; *NR II*, fig. 482.

[120] *BMQ* 27, Pl. XXXVI: *d.*

[121] *CNI*, S.160 // *S–S II*, Pl. IV: 3 and 5.

[122] *AT, Atlas*, Pl. XXXIII: 44 // *NR II*, fig. 440 and *BMB 3* (1939), Pl. XIII.

[123] E.g., *CNI*, A.4 // *S–S II*, Pl. V: 3; *NR II*, figs. 483–4 // *S–S II*, Pl. VI: 2 and *AT, Atlas*, Pls. XXVII: 22–XXX; *NR II*, fig. 44 // *Khor. II*, Pls. 53–54.

interesting, as it contains the representation of two addorsed human-headed sphinxes who, with their wings beginning well below the usual line of the belly, their vertically-fluted bib with beaded border, lack of shoulder ornament and incised eye with drill-hole for the pupil, are part of the same hybrid tradition as the sphinx from Samaria (fig. 30c); and Crowfoot has actually noted an unpublished fragment related to the Samaria sphinx, which shows the tails of two animals back to back.[124]

Some of the *à jour* fragments of the nursing cow plaques found in Rooms V and W of the Northwest Palace seem to be of the same tradition as the Arslan Tash group.[125] Others from Fort Shalmaneser we have discussed above in relation to their association with stands of papyrus as a convention closer to the original Egyptian model, and serving also as a compositional device to balance the plaque. In addition, a group of some half-dozen pieces from Room NW21 of the Fort also belong here. Of these, two show the nursing cow motif. In general, the carving could be said to be more baroque, with curving bodies, a lace-like fringe as the calves' dewlaps, the added pattern at the base of the cows' horns, curling nostril, and careful indication of all four teats. Still they are very closely related in both execution and patterning to both the relief and *à jour* pieces from Arslan Tash.[126] Two others in the same series from NW21 show files of grazing animals, and to these must be added the bulls with lowered heads from Room SW37 (fig. 21).[127] Not only do these latter connect to the plaques with the same theme from Arslan Tash, but also, by the two branched and twisted plants which frame each animal, they form a link to the same plant framing the cows and calves of the relief group from the site.[128]

Arslan Tash and the Northwest Palace at Nimrud also share almost identical plaques whose sole design seems to have been stands of alternating papyrus buds and flowers on long stalks, with three-part sepals to each flower.[129] A fragment of a lotus garland, also with three-part

---

[124] *CNI*, G.2, from Rooms V–W of the Northwest Palace // *S–S II*, Pl. VI: 1 and p. 20.

[125] *CNI*, C. 22–23, 29, 31–32, 34 // *AT, Atlas*, Pl. XXXVIII: 66–XL: 74.

[126] *NR II*, figs. 436 and 437.

[127] Ibid., figs. 435 and esp. 439, 550 and 553.

[128] Cf. *AT, Atlas*, Pl. XLI, but also especially, École Biblique no. 28.6, where the plant is narrower and more attenuated than any published, rather on the order of the twisted papyrus stalks of the Arslan Tash frontal man plaque.

[129] *CNI*, B. 11 // *AT, Atlas*, Pl. XLV: 101–103.

sepals, is also preserved from the Southeast Palace, executed in incision and stained exactly as the fragments from Arslan Tash.[130] Other examples of incision and staining occur in examples from Room JJ of the Northwest Palace, as rosettes formed by concentric circles, and in an elaborate interlace design from Room NW21 of Fort Shalmaneser (fig. 39).[131] A number of drooping-palm plaques have also been found in the Fort, corresponding mainly to the taller, more elongated series from Samaria, with tripartite fronds; thus far, two examples have been published, from Rooms SW11–12 and SW37, in addition to the complete frieze of seven plaques from NW15.[132]

The Nimrud collections thus contain a number of significant parallels to the Arslan Tash—Samaria—Khorsabad group. It is striking that so many of the parallels from Fort Shalmaneser come specifically from Room NW21 on the one hand and SW37 on the other. Now, SW37 is a particularly large and mixed collection; but the concentration of pieces in Room NW21 leads one to wonder if, as has been established for Room SW7, there may have been a cohesive collection stored in that room that could have come from a single place. This same speculation has in fact been made on entirely independent grounds by A. R. Millard, in his discussion of the similar fitter's marks on some of the ivories from NW21 and from Arslan Tash, suggesting they might even come from the same workshop.[133] Both observations therefore in a way reinforce our attempt to establish the Arslan Tash—Samaria—Khorsabad group as a discrete one, and to see in some of the Nimrud ivories pieces of the same origin.[134]

---

[130] *CNI*, S. 164*c*.

[131] *CNI*, K.2 and *NR II*, fig. 441; and cf. also the incised winged disc fragment from Room HH of the Northwest Palace (*CNI*, J.3), with regard to the stained and incised example from Arslan Tash cited above.

[132] *NR II*, figs. 503, 572 and 580 // *S–S II*, Pl. XX: 3–5 and XXI: 2.

[133] "Alphabetic Inscriptions on Ivories from Nimrud", *Iraq* 24 (1962), 50–51, esp. re: Pl. XXIV *c* // *AT, Atlas*, Pl. XXVI: 21.

[134] It must be added that parallels also exist at Nimrud for the two inlay groups from Samaria. The silhouette pieces have been cited above; the modelled inlay group includes *CNI*, C. 48–54 and d. 9; *NR II*, figs. 477–479. However, as these are likely classic Phoenician pieces and thus imported into Samaria, there is no point in pursuing these pieces at Nimrud, as they could have reached the Assyrian capital from any of the Phoenician cities as well.

Zincirli and Carchemish

Surprising parallels in this group have also turned up among the small finds from Zincirli, capital of ancient Sam'al in North Syria. It is clear from first glance that the relatively small collection of ivories found in Building J/K—the palace originally built by Kilamuwa (fl. 840– 830 B.C.) and added to by Bar-Rakib (fl. 730–720 B.C.)—does not constitute a homogeneous assemblage. Some of the fragments are very much of the North Syrian school.[135] Others, however, are unusually egyptianizing for North Syria, and this group shows particularly close ties with Samaria, Arslan Tash and Khorsabad.

In particular, several fragments of lions carved in the round were discovered, their bodies couchant, but the heads raised so that the overall volume occupied by the animals is rather wedge-shaped (fig. 44).[136] Very similar lions in the identical pose were found at Samaria,[137] and both sets of animals are mortised in exactly the same manner: at the top of the back, to receive a vertical insert (cf. figs. 46 and 47). Both the Samaria and the Zincirli lions further share similar treatment of the open mouths and manes consisting of irregularly-arranged flame-like locks with a sort of radiating bang-effect on the forehead. It is thus likely not only that they share a common origin, but also that all served the same function: most probably set in a trapezoidal or triangular panel or at the arm of a chair, as part of the support for the arm-rest, where it would be desirable for the head and forequarters to be prominent.[138]

In addition, a set of three rectangular objects with relief carving on three sides and mortise slots on the fourth was also found at Zincirli, which must equally have served as furniture-supports (cf. fig. 48).[139] Another example of the same type of object was discovered in Room FF of the Northwest Palace at Nimrud, also with decoration on three

---

[135] E.g., F. von Luschan *et al.*, *Ausgrabungen in Sendschirli V*, Berlin, 143 (henceforth, *AiS V*), Pl. 71 *an* (horse and chariot fragment) // *SW7*, no. 1; *CNI*, S.1 (the hunt pyxis), and *NR II*, fig. 462—a plaque fragment from Room SW37, F.S.; also, *Ais V*, Pl. 71*a–aa* (nibbling goat pyxis) // B. Hrouda, *Tell Halaf IV*, Berlin, 1962, Pl. 10: 63–69 and *CNI*, S.49.

[136] *AiS V*, Pls. 64–65a.

[137] *S–S II*, Pl. IX: 1.

[138] Virtually identical ivory lions have been found in excavations of the Artemision on the island of Thasos in Greece (fig. 45, published by F. Salviati, "Lions d'ivoire orientaux à Thasos", *BCH* 86 (1962), 95–116, and discussed more recently by A. J. Graham, "The Foundation of Thasos", *BSA* 73 (1978), esp. 86–7 and fn. 249.

[139] *AiS V*, Pl. 651–h, 66a–f and 67.

sides and mortise on the back (fig. 49). Not only are the mortises the same as at Zincirli, but the dowel holes at the two sides are also placed in the identical fashion.

All of the Nimrud and Zincirli examples include representations of generally egyptianizing figures, yet wearing what Barnett has called the characteristic "Syrian" woman's garment of long vertically-striated skirt.[140] On the Nimrud piece, a woman is represented in Egyptian wig, with the horns and sun-disc of Hathor on her head; at Zincirli, figures in Egyptian wigs and collars hold various objects, including good "Phoenician"-style palmettes and in one case, a bowl with the Egyptian "Eye of Horus" above. This very detail is preserved on a small fragment from Samaria, on which one sees only the hand, bowl and hieroglyph (fig. 50).[141] A fragment of the long striated skirt with beaded border is also found at Samaria (fig. 51), and several of the fragments of very egyptianizing heads with elongated eyes are quite similar to the Zincirli representations.[142] Furthermore, both the voluted palmette plants on these objects and the actual fragment of a large voluted plant have very close parallels in the Samaria assemblage.[143]

Finally, several fragments of solid furniture-supports were discovered, which include, in a far better state of preservation, the identical type of strut with torus and everted palm leaves that we have discussed above from Khorsabad and Arslan Tash.[144] The shape of the whole piece has been reconstructed as a footstool, based in part upon a fragment of a relief found near Hilani III at Zincirli, on which just such a stool is represented.[145] What is especially interesting about this parallel is that on the relief, the decorative panel above the tooled crossbar of the stool consists of a frieze of "drooping-palm" plants of the same sort as we have been discussing throughout. They are arranged as reconstructed by Thureau-Dangin, frond-tip to tip, and although the upper left-hand corner of the relief is broken, it is possible to reconstruct by measuring the three remaining plant elements that there would have been space for seven in the frieze.

---

[140] *CNI*, 78.
[141] Cf. *AiS V*, Pl. 67c // *S–S II*, Pl. XIII: 13.
[142] Cf. *AiS V*, Pl. 66b // *S–S II*, Pl. XII: 15.
[143] *AiS V*, Pl. 70u // *S–S //*, Pl. XVII: 4, 10, etc.
[144] *AiS V*, Pl. 61k and reconstruction, Pl. 62.
[145] *AiS V*, Pl. 62.

This is particularly noteworthy because there were exactly seven plant elements preserved in the complete frieze discovered in Fort Shalmaneser (cf. above); and another series of seven *à jour* drooping palm plaques was found in the temple of the Storm-God at Carchemish.[146]

These Carchemish pieces are of the same general type as those of squatter proportion from Arslan Tash and Samaria, although here, in another variation, the fronds are divided into two sections each, and the usual chevron at the branching of the fronds is replaced by a floral spike. We will discuss below what the chronological and historical links between Carchemish, Arslan Tash, Samaria and Zincirli may have been; however for the moment it is interesting to note that the particular floral motif as an element in furniture decoration must therefore have encompassed several types, as we have already noted the occurrence of such a figure as a vertical support depicted on a table from Karatepe.

In the meantime, with regard to the general assemblage of ivory carvings we have been discussing, what we hope is manifest by now is that there are a series of connections—stylistic and iconographic—which bind the collections of Arslan Tash, Samaria and Khorsabad and to which pieces from Nimrud, Zincirli and Carchemish may be added. If we are to understand how these similarities can be explained, it is now necessary to turn to an investigation of the archaeological contexts and dates of the ivories, with a view toward establishing a historical framework for the phenomena thus far observed.

Dating and History: Arslan Tash

The internal evidence is actually quite meagre for dating the group of ivories which we have attempted to establish. At Arslan Tash, the building in which the ivories were found has generally been dated *by* the ivory Hazael label. On archaeological grounds, however, it cannot be established more precisely than ninth-seventh century[147] and in fact, there is actually no evidence in the building of a ninth-century occupation; while the nearby palace was certainly restored, if not built in

---

[146] C. L. Woolley and R. D. Barnett, *Carchemish III*, London, 1952, Pl. 71: f and p. 167.

[147] G. Turner, "The Palace and 'Bâtiment aux ivoires' at Arslan Tash: A Reappraisal", *Iraq* 30 (1968), 67.

the eighth century, sometime during the *turtan*-ship of Šamši-ilu (who served as a relatively independent governor of the western provinces from at least 796–752 under Adad-narari III, Shalmaneser IV, Aššur-dan III and Aššur-nirari V), or the reign of Tiglath-pileser III.[148] It has further been suggested that at least some building on the palace was undertaken by Sargon.[149]

If the assumption is correct that the Hazael mentioned in the Arslan Tash inscription is indeed the king of Damascus who reigned from *c.* 845–805 B.C., then the label and the plain rectangular frame that probably comes from a bed found in the same room could well be ninth century in date. This unfortunately does not necessarily mean that the decorated pieces found not in immediate proximity to the bed, but rather scattered from Room 14 and other locations into the courtyard, must be of the same date.[150] In fact, Frankfort had originally felt the ivories to be of the eighth century, along with those similar pieces from Nimrud and Khorsabad;[151] and more recently Naveh and Millard have noted that the forms of the Aramaic letters incised on the backs of a number of pieces are best dated in the eighth century not the ninth.[152]

The decorated pieces do seem to comprise a generally homogeneous assemblage, although as we have noted, they do indicate a range from more "Phoenician" to more "hybrid/South Syrian." Since the site of Arslan Tash is clearly in North Syria, however, one question which must be asked is when the pieces are most likely to have arrived at the site. If we pursue the assumption that at least some, if not all, of the pieces represent material collected in Hazael's Damascus—whether manufactured there or initially gathered from Phoenicia, then some knowledge of Assyrian activity in relation to Damascus should figure in any explanation of the transport of these ivories from Damascus to their place of discovery in an Assyrian provincial centre in North Syria.

---

[148] *AT, Text*, p. 40.

[149] Turner, *Iraq* 30, 65, feels certain of the architectural features could be as late as Shalmaneser V or very early Sargon II; Parrot, *Archéologie Mésopotamienne* I, 467, also suggests that a wing of the royal apartments is Sargonid.

[150] *AT, Text*, pp. 89–91.

[151] *Art and Architecture*, 192–196.

[152] Joseph Naveh, personal communication; A. R. Millard, *Iraq* 24, 51. Thimme (Karlsruhe catalogue, p. xix) has further noted that the letter forms on the reverse of several of the grazing stags purporting to be from Arslan Tash are very similar to those from Samaria. He quotes W. Röllig as being of the opinion that despite the paucity of early inscriptions with which to compare these letters, they should be put before the mid-eighth century.

Unfortunately, we have little direct information pertaining to Arslan Tash itself. The ancient name for the site, Hadatu, occurs only once in a dated Assyrian text, of the time of Aššurbanipal (668–627).[153] The site itself is on the eastern side of the Euphrates only twenty miles east of Carchemish, and *c.* 25–30 miles to the northeast of Til-Barsib. It is likely to have been annexed by Shalmaneser III in his conquest of Bit-Adini.[154] Since Hazael is recorded as an antagonist of Shalmaneser III, it is not impossible that the bed of Hazael and the ivories could have been taken by that king and brought to the recently conquered territory.[155] Subsequently, Adad-nirari III (810–783 B.C.) campaigned in Damascus, and actually recorded the taking of the ivory couch and bed of the king of Damascus as booty.[156] Even more striking evidence comes from the following reign of Shalmaneser IV, during which time the *turtan* Šamši-ilu added an inscription on the reverse of a stele previously inscribed by Adad-nirari, identifying himself as the one who went to Damascus and received the tribute of one Hadianu the Damascene, including his "royal bed and royal couch."[157] Now, we know that Šamši-ilu was engaged in building activity at Til-Barsib, and had control over all of this region of North Syria in the period.[158] It would be not at all unlikely for tribute taken by him to be placed at Arslan Tash. Then, finally, in the reign of Tiglath-pileser III, Damascus was conquered and annexed to Assyria.[159] It is therefore interesting to note the use

---

[153] S. Parpola, *Neo-Assyrian Toponyms* (*AOAT* 6), Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1970, 141.

[154] Cf. J. N. Postgate, "Ḫadāt(t)u", in *RlA* IV, 38.

[155] *ARAB* I, § 575 (= year 18). In year 11, Shalmaneser had referred to Adad-idri (Bar-Hadad II) as king of Damascus (cf. *ARAB* I, § 568, and D. J. Wiseman, "Hada-dezer", in *RlA* IV, 38). The campaign against Hazael in year 19 is further mentioned in the Kurba'il statue inscription (J. V. Kinnier-Wilson, "The Kurba'il Statue of Shalmaneser III", *Iraq* 24 (1962) 95, ll. 1–24), but it is significant that Shalmaneser describes fighting with Hazael in the mountains of the Anti-Lebanon, pursuing him to Damascus and besieging the city; he does not mention sacking the city or any booty or tribute from there—only spoils from surrounding villages, and tribute subsequently from Tyre, Sidon and Jehu of Israel. Since he is so specific about these latter, if he *had* acquired goods from Damascus at the time, we may perhaps assume it would have been mentioned.

[156] *ARAB* I, § 740. This possibility had been suggested by Barnett (*Iraq* 2 (1935), 185).

[157] Pazarçik stele, rev., ll. 5–8, currently in the Maraş Museum, which will be published by Kemal Balkan.

[158] Cf. F. Thureau-Dangin, "L'inscription des lions de Til-Barsib", *RA* 27 (1930), 11–22.

[159] *ARAB* I, § 779; D. J. Wiseman, "A Fragmentary Inscription of Tiglath-pileser III From Nimrud", *Iraq* 18 (1956), 117ff.

of the term *māt bīt-Haza'ili*, "land of the house of Hazael", as a term for Damascus in the period, as well as a fragmentary letter found at Nimrud referring to booty being sent from Damascus to the Assyrian king[160]—all in the context of the fact that some at least of the building activity in Hadatu may have occurred during Tiglath-pileser's reign.

In summary, then, events in the reigns of Shalmaneser III, Adad-nirari III, Shalmaneser IV and Tiglath-pileser III could all provide contexts for ivories from Damascus being transferred to the site of Arslan Tash. The more explicit references of Šamši-ilu during the reign of Shalmaneser IV and of Tiglath-pileser seem most compelling, as the Damascus/North Syria link is there, and would not be able to be documented for other, Phoenician, cities. In a way, this strengthens the assumption that the Hazael inscription speaks for the origin of the collection as a whole. The chronological range of references cited for the transport of the collection can perhaps be limited to a time between the campaign of Adad-nirari III in Damascus in 796 and annexation by Tiglath-pileser III in 732, although the ivories could of course have been manufactured earlier. It must be emphasized, however, that this does not necessarily signify that the ivories taken from Damascus had to have been manufactured there, since the dedicatory inscription itself: "…to our lord Hazael in the year of …" could suggest a luxurious gift from outside as well as inside, although the "our" would tend to imply donors within Aram.

Samaria

The Samaria material, while no more datable from its archaeological context, does help to strengthen the Damascus connections of the group. Accounts are unfortunately not consistent even in the reporting of the ivories' find-spots; however it is clear that the original Harvard Expedition attribution of the ivories to "the floor of the Ahab court-yard"—as if the building were historically fixed in the reign of that king—is not warranted.[161] In the subsequent British excavations at the site, the time of Ahab is designated as Period III, while the ivories

---

[160] Wiseman, op. cit., 120–121; H. W. F. Saggs, "The Nimrud Letters, 1952—Part II", *Iraq* 17 (1955), 153.
[161] *HE I*, 368.

were actually reported as found associated with either Period VI[162] or Period VII[163]—that is, in the debris of the Assyrian destruction of 722, or even later fill. According to the published account,[164] all of the ivories were found in disturbed context: although most within the Israelite Period building, nevertheless mixed with debris ranging from Neo-Babylonian to Hellenistic to Roman, and including one medieval coin. The pieces of an alabaster vessel inscribed with the cartouche of the Egyptian pharaoh Osorkon II (870?–847 B.C.) close to one ivory fragment[165] does *not* help to date the ivories, as has been suggested, since such alabaster vessels are known to have been associated with quite late contexts elsewhere—e.g. in Almuñecar, Spain, where the pottery was of the late eighth century, or even at Nimrud.[166]

Thus at best, all that we have for the ivories is a likely *terminus ante quem* of the conquest of Samaria by Shalmaneser V in 722, completed in 720 by Sargon II. The scholarly preference for putting the Samaria ivories into the ninth century has been mainly predicated upon the Biblical reference to Ahab's "House of Ivory" (I *Kings* 22:39). While certainly attractive, it is, however, by no means conclusive on archaeological grounds. Furthermore, when Amos writes his diatribe against luxury—the "houses of ivory" and the rich "that lie upon couches of ivory" (*Amos* 3:15 and 6:4), he is writing in the time of Jeroboam II (786–746 B.C.). This is preceded (*Amos* 3:12) by a prophecy that an adversary shall despoil the palaces of Israel (Samaria) and the inhabitants will be left with but broken bits of furniture. One is tempted in fact to see here "ivory furniture";[167] in any event, the reference suggests

---

[162] J. W. Crowfoot, G. M. Crowfoot and K. M. Kenyon, *Samaria-Sebaste III: The Objects from Samaria*, London, 1957, 94–97.

[163] J. M. Crowfoot, K. M. Kenyon and E. L. Sukenik, *Samaria-Sebaste I: The Buildings at Samaria*, London, 1966, 110–111. In fact, the date of the "Ahab" palace itself has been questioned, and may be as late as Jeroboam II (cf. J. Finegan, *Light from the Ancient Past*, Princeton, 1946, 155).

[164] *S–S II*, 2–4.

[165] *HE II*, Pl. 56: g (vase fragment) and Pl. 56: f (*à jour* fragment of winged and crowned uraeus-serpent in ivory).

[166] Cf. discussion of this very point in I. J. Winter, review of Mallowan and Herrmann, *SW7*, in *AJA* 80 (1976), 203. Cf. also the mention in Mallowan and Herrmann, *SW7*, 60 and fn. 12, of a scarab of Osorkon I or probably II also found in Tomb 2 at Salamis on Cyprus, where it was clearly an heirloom.

[167] Dr. Daniela Salz, of the Israel Exploration Society, Jerusalem, has pointed out this passage to me, and will write in the future on the etymology of the Hebrew words for the furniture, which will, in fact, provide further links to Damascus. I am grateful for her permission to make reference to the forthcoming study in the present context.

a continuity at least in the tradition of ivory decoration within élite and royal residences that would preclude the possibility of limiting the actual occurrence of ivory to the period of Ahab. Rather, a date in the reign of Jeroboam seems equally appropriate, and would further fit well with the palaeographic evidence presented by Röllig (cited above, fn. 151). In addition, Menahem of Samaria (745–738 B.C.) is among the kings who paid tribute to Tiglath-pileser III, and although the Old Testament account refers only to silver (II *Kings* 15:19–20), in the Assyrian annals, he is listed among a group of several tributaries, and ivory is included among the goods received.[168] Therefore, although we cannot rule out the possibility of ivory heirlooms in existence for some hundred years before the destruction of Samaria, neither must we discount the possibility that all or part of the collection belongs to the latest possible moment, i.e. up to 720.

How does this fit the historical context in which the ivories might have been manufactured?

The Samaria collection has most frequently been attributed wholly to the Phoenician sphere.[169] However as early as 1933, when Watzinger proposed his division of the group into two parts, as discussed above, he actually suggested that one might be connected with Phoenician work, while the other, by virtue of the similarities to the collection at Arslan Tash and the Aramaic inscription present there, might be Aramaean in origin. He even went so far as to speculate that a centre of production in Damascus seemed "not impossible".[170] This is important to note, since Watzinger's suggestion seems not to have been pursued in the literature, and indeed when the present author first formulated the idea of a South Syrian group, it was thought to be something not hitherto discussed.[171]

Watzinger's far-seeing suggestion of some 45 years ago, especially with regard to Damascus, fits well with the evidence from Arslan Tash and with the criteria laid out for the hypothetical formulation of what

---

[168] *ARAB* I, § 772.
[169] Cf. Frankfort and Kenyon, cited fn. 6, above.
[170] *Denkmäler Palästinas I*, 112–114 (more recently followed by Avigad, in *Eretz Shomron*, 75–85.
[171] W. F. Albright had raised the question of Damascus ("The Northeast Mediterranean Dark Ages and the Early Iron Age Art of Syria", in S. Weinberg, ed., *The Aegean and the Near East: Studies Presented to Hetty Goldman*, Locust Valley, 1956, 161), but only as a shot in the dark, suggesting that the whole North Syrian group from Nimrud attributed by Barnett to Hamath could just as well have been manufactured in Damascus.

a South Syrian style in touch with both Phoenician and North Syrian traditions *should* look like. It also fits the historical background of Samaria and the kingdom of Israel.

The capital of Israel was established at Samaria by Omri (*c.* 876–869 B.C.) in the seventh year of his reign, having been moved from the previous site of Tirzah (thought by many to be Tell el-Farah North).[172] The shift of the new capital westward was presumably motivated at least in part by a desire to put it in better proximity to routes connecting Israel with the Phoenician coast. This fact, along with the marriage of Omri's son and successor Ahab to a Phoenician princess, Jezebel, and the subsequent construction of a temple to her Phoenician deity Ba'al at the site have led, both in Biblical and later historical accounts, to an emphasis upon the relations between Samaria and Phoenicia.[173] With this perspective, the possibly older and certainly equally strong traditional ties between Israel and Aram have tended to become obscured, beyond occasional accounts of political friction and war. However it should be noted that the location of Samaria (from its inception a *secular* royal city, with its cult centre at Bethel)[174] not only allowed direct access to the coast, but also maintained direct routes of communication with the east and north, up into Syria. The clearest evidence for these ties is contained in the account of the peace-terms after Ahab's victory over Bar-Hadad of Damascus (I *Kings* 20:34), in which it was acknowledged that in the past Damascus had maintained commercial interests (ḥūṣōth, "bazaars" or markets) in Samaria, and that Ahab would now have the right to establish *his* markets in Damascus.[175]

---

[172] Cf. I *Kings* 16: 23f; and on the history of Samaria and the location of Tirzah, Kenyon, *Royal Cities*, 72–73, and H. Tadmor, "On the History of Samaria in the Biblical Period", in *Eretz Shomron*, Y. Aviram, ed., Jerusalem, 1973, 67–74 (in Hebrew).

[173] Kenyon, *Royal Cities*, 73–74; A. Parrot, *Samaria: Capital of the Kingdom of Israel*, London, 1958, 24; M. F. Unger, *Israel and the Aramaeans of Damascus*, Grand Rapids, 1957, 63; A. Lemaire, "Milkiram, nouveau roi de Tyr?", *Syria 53* (1976), 88; and Y. Yadin, "The 'House of Baal' in Samaria and Judah", in *Eretz Shomron*, Y. Aviram, ed., Jerusalem, 1973, 52–66 (in Hebrew, English summary, pp. xiv–xv).

[174] On this, cf. Tadmor, in *Eretz Shomron*, op. cit.

[175] On this, cf. B. Mazar, "The Aramaean Empire and its Relations with Israel", *BA* 25 (1962), 102–107. Unger, *Israel and the Aramaeans of Damascus*, 61, feels the term "Samaria" referred not only to the capital in this case, but to the whole country, but I find this unconvincing as the parallel phrasing puts city to city, not country to country: thus, Damascus: Samaria, not Aram: Samaria. In her dissertation on "The Material Culture in the Area of the Kingdom of Israel during the eighth and seventh centuries, B.C.", for The Hebrew University, Shulamit Geva has suggested that she can recognize such a commercial quarter in Hazor, Area G. This includes a storage building, heavily fortified, yet not the regular Israelite storage building, and set in an

This attestation of traditional relations between Aram and Israel, both in peace and in war, provides the historical context in which luxury goods could well have been moving between the two centres—either as booty or as the result of peace-time exchange. In fact, in the description of Elisha's arrival in Damascus as an envoy of Ahab, where he was greeted by none other than Hazael, the eventual usurper then acting for the ailing Bar-Hadad, with gifts consisting of forty camel-burdens (II *Kings* 8:9), we have a particularly vivid account of the high-level exchange of luxury goods that must have been taking place at the time.

Nor is the reign of Ahab the only period in which such exchanges could have been taking place. Jehoash (*c.* 801–786), son of Jehoahaz, took cities from Bar-Hadad II, the son of Hazael (II *Kings* 13:25) and could have acquired booty or tribute then. During his long reign, Jeroboam II (*c.* 786–746) extended the territory of Israel north to the borders of Hamath, thereby exercising some control over territory flanking Damascus if not the city itself (II *Kings* 14:25, 28)[176]—affording thereby access to the products of Damascene manufacture; and it is precisely to this period that the imprecations of Amos belong.

It is also possible that at the time when Menahem of Samaria paid tribute to Tiglath-pileser III, Israel and Aram were not adversaries, but rather united in the face of the threat from Assyria. And finally, we know that Pekah of Samaria (*c.* 737–732) was allied with Rezin of Damascus against Judah[177] and the political climate could well have been conducive to material exchange as well.

In other words, as Mazar has noted,[178] despite the importance of relations between Samaria and Tyre, Israel was also closely tied to Aram where "mutual relations affecting all areas of life developed between them". In addition, the waxing and waning of the Aramaean state must have had important consequences for the economic and political life of Samaria. Despite the fact that, after the Aramaean campaigns of Assyria

---

area adjacent to, but outside, the city gate (hence *ḥūṣōth*, from Hebrew *ḥūṣ*, "outside"), which would establish the tradition of such quarters within the kingdom of Israel generally in our period.

[176] Cf. M. Haran, "The Rise and Fall of the Empire of Jeroboam ben Joash", *VT* 17 (1967), 278–284.

[177] II *Kings* 15:37 and 16: 5; *Isa.* 7:2; and *ARAB* I, § 772, for tribute of Rezin of Arami and Menahem of Samerina to Tiglath-pileser III. See also B. Oded, "The historical background of the Syro-Ephraimite War reconsidered", *CBQ 34* (1972), 153–165.

[178] *BA* 25, 113, 116.

in the reign of Adad-nirari III, the hegemony of Damascus must have been on the decline until the eventual annexation by Tiglath-pileser in 732,[179] the power held by Jeroboam and Jehoash in Aram need not have heralded any cessation of luxury production.

One cannot deny the possibility that some of the Samaria ivories could have been manufactured at Samaria itself—either by itinerant craftsmen or by residents, possibly of foreign origin—especially as unworked tusk fragments were reputedly found at the site.[180] This in itself would not constitute sufficient evidence to suggest production at Samaria, since portions of tusks can be incorporated into finished objects. However since a clear series of ivory waste flakes was recovered at Megiddo in Late Bronze/Early Iron context,[181] and as the few pieces from Hazor suggest to my eyes at least a sub-set of the larger South Syrian style (cf. fn. 108, above), the possibility of independent production in Israel cannot be ignored. All three sites, Samaria, Megiddo and Hazor, do fall within the broadly defined geographical and stylistic region of South Syria in our period, and the Hazor ivory and bone all belong in the appropriate time range as well, coming from well-stratified deposits of the eighth century B.C. Leaving Hazor and the problem of local manufacture aside, the historical relationships outlined above for Samaria and Arslan Tash, as well as the stylistic relationships that link the carved group of ivories from these two sites, all point to Damascus—whether as central place of manufacture or as cultural centre from which stimuli originated and objects dispersed, and this is further supported by the identification of the alphabetic characters on the reverse of some of the Samaria ivories as Aramaic rather than Hebrew forms (J. Naveh, personal communication).

Nimrud and Khorsabad

It is regrettable that the ivories of similar style found at Nimrud are not very helpful in fixing either chronological or historical factors of origin. Fort Shalmaneser was used over a long period—from the time of its

---

[179] Cf. A. R. Millard and H. Tadmor, "Adad-nirari III in Syria", *Iraq* 35 (1973), 64.

[180] *S–S II*, Pl. XXII: 3, the only fragment published, measures 103 cm long × 5.3 cm in diameter.

[181] Information courtesy of Yigael Shiloh, The Hebrew University, Jerusalem. I am grateful to Dr. Shiloh for showing me the fragments, and as far as it is possible to determine, they are indeed waste flakes and not just exfoliated sections following the natural lamination of the tusk.

founder to at least the reigns of Tiglath-pileser III and Sargon; and the Burnt Palace was not destroyed until the fall of Nimrud itself.[182] The Northwest Palace was built by Aššurnaṣirpal II in the ninth century, but was restored by Sargon and used as his residence until Khorsabad was constructed, and we are told specifically that he used the palace to store booty from various military campaigns.[183]

Despite this long range of occupation for the buildings at Nimrud, we may be able to be more precise in some cases. One of the ivory hoards from the Northwest Palace—a group including an incised plaque with overlapping pattern of volutes and a relief plaque showing a stand of alternating papyrus buds and flowers, both with close parallels at Samaria, Arslan Tash and Khorsabad—comes from Mallowan's excavations in Room HH, where stratigraphic observations have given a Sargonid date to the deposit on the basis of associated dated dockets.[184]

Opportunities for the ivories of our group to have come *into* Nimrud abound, including the campaigns of Shalmaneser III in which he recorded ivory tribute from Damascus and general tribute from Jehu of Samaria.[185] As noted above, Adad-nirari III also campaigned against Damascus in 796, and received goods both from Aram and from Bit-Omri (Samaria), all or some of which could have been carried back to Assyria.[186] We know less about the reign of Shalmaneser IV, but the mention of the campaign led by Šamši-ilu on the Pazarçik stele tells us that further campaigns were mounted against Damascus in this period.[187] Tiglath-pileser finally annexed Damascus in 732 after a series of campaigns in northern Syria, and whatever annexation may have meant in official terms, he still had to put down rebellion there in 727,[188] so there was ample opportunity to acquire ivory goods, even though the Annals become less explicit in this period as to specific booty from specific places. At least we do know that the kings of both Damascus

---

[182] *NR I*, pp. 204–5; *NR II*, pp. 384–390.

[183] *ARAB II*, §§ 137–138.

[184] M. E. L. Mallowan, "The Excavations at Nimrud (Kalhu), 1949–50: Ivories From the North-west Palace", *Iraq* 13 (1951), 19–20 and Pl. X: 2; *Iraq* 14 (1952), 47, fn. 29 and 49, Pls. XVII left (= NO 906A) and XVIII.

[185] *ARAB* I, §§ 475, 476 and 590.

[186] Ibid. §§ 734, 740.

[187] This is confirmed by the Eponym Canon C^b2: "against Damascus", given for the year 773 (cf. A. Ungnad), "Eponymen", in *RlA* II, 450.

[188] *ARAB* I, § 769; and cf. Unger, *Israel and the Aramaeans of Damascus*, 103, with regard to the later rebellion and the Eponym Canon.

and Samaria were among the tributaries in 738, as cited above, and that ivories in general are listed among the goods received.

One would assume that any ivories manufactured in Damascus and taken from Damascus would have a *terminus ante quem* of *c.* 732 when Tiglath-pileser annexed Aram. For goods coming to Assyria from Samaria, however, the *terminus* could be extended for at least another decade, to Sargon's sack and annexation in 720.[189]

In this respect, it is important to note the heavy use of both Fort Shalmaneser and the Northwest Palace into the eighth century. This is particularly significant in light of the assemblage of ivories found at Khorsabad, for this last was occupied only during the reign of Sargon, and wherever the ivories found there may have been manufactured, they were clearly *moved* to Khorsabad during a very limited period of time. In fact, the second half of the eighth century is the best period in which to account for *all* of our ivories' movement: on the one hand, the campaigns of Tiglath-pileser III in Damascus, correlated with the possibility of his sculptural programme at Arslan Tash and the ivories found there, the inscriptions citing booty moving from Damascus toward Assyria, and the use of the several buildings at Nimrud; and on the other hand, the activity of Sargon II in Samaria, his installation of the palaces at Khorsabad, and the ties between the collections of ivories from Samaria, Khorsabad and the buildings used by Sargon at Nimrud. This is precisely the time when Isaiah records the bringing of spoils from both Damascus and Samaria before the king of Assyria (cf. above, fn. 3). Furthermore, on purely internal grounds, André Parrot has suggested that the Samaria ivories seem more logically to be placed in the eighth century, for it is likely that in the religious reforms initiated by Jehu after the reign of Ahab, all "Phoenician" remnants would probably have been removed, only to creep gradually back in with the reigns of Jeroboam II and Menahem.[190] And finally, added to this is the epigraphic evidence of the letters on the backs of several of the Arslan Tash, Samaria and Nimrud ivories of our group, which are judged to be eighth century in form.[191]

---

[189] II *Kings* 17:15; and H. Tadmor, "The Campaigns of Sargon II of Assyria: A Chronological Historical Study", *JCS* 12 (1958), 37–38.

[190] Parrot, *Samaria*, 28–29.

[191] Cf. the ivory in *NR II*, fig. 581; and comment in J. Naveh, *The Development of the Aramaean Script*, Jerusalem, 1970, fig. 2: nos. 2 and 3, and Millard, *Iraq* 24, 51.

Zincirli and Carchemish

The two smaller assemblages of ivories from Carchemish and Zincirli support this later context. Although the site of Carchemish was occupied throughout the early first millennium, I have suggested elsewhere that the seven palm-frond plaques found in the temple of the Storm God could well have been part of the temple furniture brought to Carchemish during the Assyrian occupation after Sargon's defeat of the city in 717.[192] Similarly for Zincirli, the archaeological context is inconclusive, since the building in which the ivories were found was in use from the ninth century at least into the seventh;[193] but the presence of what we have been calling "South Syrian" ivories mixed in with others of North Syrian type at a North Syrian site becomes understandable when we remember not only that luxury objects travel as a matter of course, but also that Panamuwa II, father of Bar-Rakib of Sam'al, was vassal to Tiglath-pileser III and apparently fell in battle alongside the Assyrian king precisely during his campaign against Damascus in 732![194] It would not be untoward therefore to see this segment of the Zincirli ivories as part of the Sam'alite share in the booty from the South Syrian campaigns.

---

[192] The Carchemish ivories have been discussed in my Ph.D. dissertation, "North Syria in the Early First Millennium B.C., with special reference to Ivory Carving", Columbia University, 1973, 390. Inscribed bricks from Carchemish do attest to Sargon's having built there after 717 (cf. Woolley and Barnett, *Carchemish* III, 167 and 211); and the fact that these ivories are not of the North Syrian group but rather Phoenician or else "South Syrian", yet are the only ivories found at the site, requires some special explanation, since generally it can be established that the ivories of North Syrian and Phoenician style occupy distinct areas of distribution centring around their respective homelands (cf. Winter, *Iraq* 38, 21). Transport to Carchemish after the Assyrian occupation would be one possible solution.

[193] R. Naumann, *Architektur Kleinasiens*, Tübingen, 1955, 363–365.

[194] Donner-Röllig, *KAI*, no. 215; and B. Landsberger, *Sam'al*, Istanbul, 1947, 70. The ivory lions similar to those from Sam'al found at Thasos (cf. above, fn. 138) are unfortunately of no help in dating, either. However they might have arrived at the sanctuary of Artemis, their context is secondary, coming from fifth-century fill. Associated objects in the fill do not date earlier than the mid-seventh century, but this is not to say (with Graham, *BSA* 73, fn. 249) that the ivories could not have been part of a valued antique (throne!) even at that time. On the other hand, as Thasian stamped amphora handles have been found in sixth–fifth century contexts at Akko on the Palestinian coast *and at Samaria* (M. Dothan, Lecture at the University of Pennsylvania, 11 February, 1980), it is also conceivable that the ivories were acquired and carried to Thasos quite late.

Conclusions

Thus it becomes clear that Damascus and only Damascus can provide the common historical denominator necessary for all of the groups we have discussed, and while we cannot definitely state that the ivories themselves, or some of them, may not be ninth century in date, the best time for them to have been moving about within the Near East is certainly in the eighth century B.C., and very possibly in the second half of the century.

In stylistic terms, the ivories consist of describable sub-sets: some which appear to fit the "classic" Phoenician group and others with specific characteristics that match what one would posit on logical grounds for a "South Syrian" style in the face of already-defined Phoenician and North Syrian groups, while at the same time participating in a shared *koinē* of motifs and object-types. This last, newly-defined group would also account for the anomalies noticed by Brown in the two previously recognized groups, that had been forced to embrace hybrid pieces which seemed to combine aspects of both. Moreover, the new group can be stylistically related to Barnett's proposed "Aramaean" group of inscribed metal bowls from Nimrud, as well as to the Aramaean stele dedicated to Melqart. And finally, the independent historical grounds for explaining the presence of ivories from this group in certain find-spots outside of southern Syria can all be integrated into a consistent picture that seems to confirm Damascus as the centre from which they would best have been distributed.

In itself, this does not constitute incontrovertible proof, either of the existence of a South Syrian group of ivory carvings or of their necessary manufacture in Damascus. However the framework is sufficiently strong to suggest at least the likelihood that such a group does exist; and further that it would be most reasonable to assume that production would have been based in the primary cultural centre of South Syria—i.e. Damascus, a city which clearly possessed high-quality ivory furniture, as witnessed by the Assyrian accounts of attested booty and the Haza'el label. Finally, given what we know of the luxury production in other main centres of the period, as well as the later Islamic tradition of inlaid furniture from Syria in particular,[195] it would be unlikely that there would *not* have been luxury production going on in the city.

---

[195] Cf. *Encyclopedia of Islam*, vol. I (R. Pinder-Wilson, ed.), 200–201; *Arts of Islam* (London, 1976) 147–156; J. P. Roux, *L'Islam dans les collections nationales* (Paris, 1977), 75, 89, 93.

As we continue to refine our descriptive categories in the pursuit of stylistic characteristics that divide or unite pieces from the large assemblages of early first-millennium ivories in the Near East, it is hoped that we will be increasingly able to isolate significant sub-groups within the major styles, as has already been attempted for some of the centres within North Syria.[196] In the present case, we are still on rather shaky ground, as the ivories under discussion may well have been (re)distributed from Damascus while at the same time themselves representing a local sub-group from one of the Phoenician cities. However, the premise upon which all of the sub-divisions are based: that probably not just one but *most* of the major cultural centres in the Levant of the early first millennium B.C. were engaged in the production and exchange of luxury goods—of which ivory constituted one of the most important commodities—does seem to be holding. So that, despite the fact that the ancient levels of Damascus have never been archaeologically sounded, the historical framework as we know it suggests strongly that Damascus would not only have been a major cultural and hence production centre in our period, but also that Damascus provides the best possible context for integrating the stylistic relations observable in the collections of Arslan Tash, Samaria, Khorsabad, Nimrud and Zincirli within a historical reality—a reality which makes particularly vivid the warning (modelled after actual events?) of the prophet Isaiah.

Acknowledgments

---

[196] Winter, *MMJ* 11, 52.

Figure 1. Sphinx orthostat, re-used in Omayyad Mosque, Damascus. (National Museum, Damascus, No. S.O. 30)

Figure 2. Melqart Stele. (National Museum, Aleppo; ht. 1.15 m)

Figure 3. Stele, provenience unknown. (Berlin Museum; ht. 39 cm)
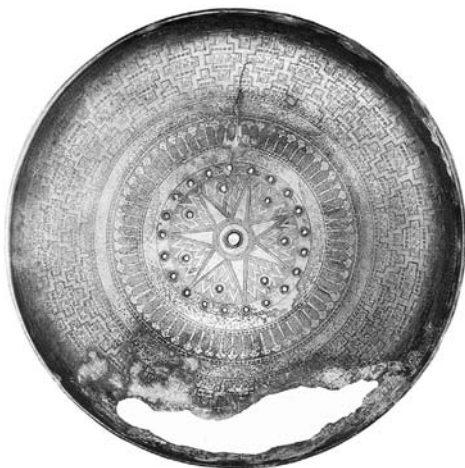
Figure 4. Bronze bowl, Nimrud. (British Museum, London)

Figure 5. Arslah Tash, ivory plaque: 2
men opposite Horus on plant.
(Louvre AO 11465; 8.3 × 9 cm).

Figure 6. Nimrud, ivory
plaque: griffin slayer, Room
SW12, Fort Shalmaneser.
(Baghdad, IM 65509;
13 × 7.7 cm)

Figure 7. Arslan Tash, ivory plaque fragment: 2 men
opposite Horus. (Louvre AO 11469; ht. 8.4 cm)

Figure 8. Samaria, ivory
plaque fragment: winged
man with blossom.
(Jerusalem, Israel Museum
33.2639; max. ht. 3.5 cm)

Figure 9. Arslan Tash, ivory plaque fragment: women with blossoms opposite tree. (Louvre AO 11472; 7.7 × 5.2 cm)

Figure 10. Khorsabad, ivory plaque fragment: woman with blossom.

Figure 11. Arslan Tash, ivory plaque fragment: 2 men binding papyrus. (Louvre AO 11470; 9.5 × 7.9 cm)
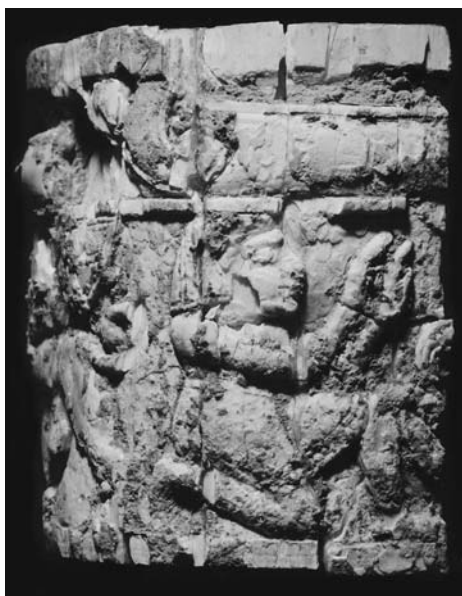
Figure 12. Hazor, ivory pyxis: kneeling man and winged animals. (Jerusalem, Israel Museum 56.1932; ht. 7.2 × 8.5 cm)
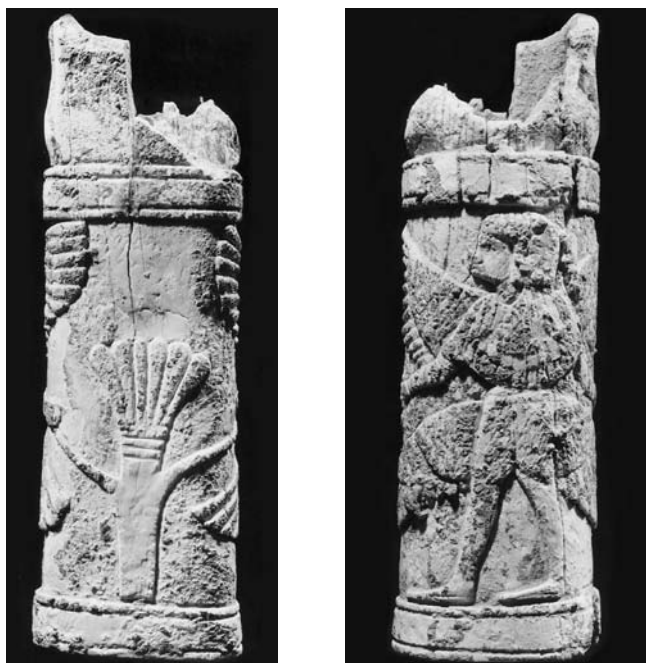
Figure 13, a and b. Hazor, bone tube: winged man grasping plant tendrils. (Jerusalem, Israel Museum 56.1937; 18.0 × 5.5 cm)

Figure 14. Arslan Tash, ivory plaque: frontal man with blossoms. (Louvre AO 11488; 15.8 × 5.7 cm)

Figure 15. Nimrud, ivory plaque: man with goat and blossom, Room SW7, Fort Shalmaneser. (Baghdad, Iraq Museum 61898; 24 × 10 cm)

Figure 16. Arslan Tash, *à jour* ivory plaque: cow and calf. (Louvre AO 11455; 6.7 × 12.2 cm)

Figure 17. Arslan Tash, carved ivory plaque: cow and calf. (Louvre AO 11452; 5.6 × 9.7 cm)
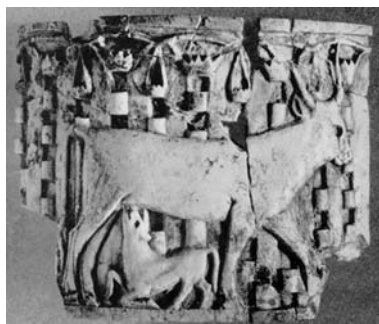
Figure 18. Nimrud, inlaid ivory plaque: cow and calf, Room SW37, Fort Shalmaneser. (Baghdad, Iraq Museum; = ND 9412; 5.6 × 6.7 cm)

Figure 19. Nimrud, *à jour* ivory plaque: cow and calf, Room SW2, Fort Shalmaneser. (Baghdad, Iraq Museum; = ND 6310; 8.5 × 7.7 cm)

Figure 20. Nimrud, ivory plaque: cow and calf, Room SW11–12, Fort Shalmaneser. (Ashmolean 1962.602; 12.6 × 6.6 cm)

Figure 21. Nimrud, ivory plaque: grazing bull, Room SW37, Fort Shalmaneser. (Toronto, Royal Ontario Museum 71K.5.59; 15.5 × 6.8 cm)

Figure 22. Samaria, inlaid ivory plaque:
Isis and Nephthys opposite Djed pillar.
(Jerusalem, Israel Museum 33.2553;
9.8 × 4.5 cm)

Figure 23. Samaria, inlaid ivory plaque:
kneeling *het* figures. (Jerusalem, Israel
Museum 33.2550; 8.0 × 5.1 cm)

Figure 24. Samaria,
silhouette inlay ivory
plaque: smiting king.

Figure 25. Samaria,
silhouette inlay ivory
plaque; man vs. lion.

Figure 26. Samaria, silhouette inlay
ivory plaque: Horus-headed griffin
with crown. (Jerusalem, Israel
Museum 33.2661; ht. 5.8 cm)

Figure 27. Samaria, *à jour* ivory plaque: lion-and-bull combat. (Jerusalem,
Israel Museum 33.2552; 11.8 × 4.2 cm)

Figure 28. Arslan Tash, *à jour* ivory plaque: 2 ram-sphinxes opposite tree.
(Aleppo Museum; 8.5 × 19.6 cm)
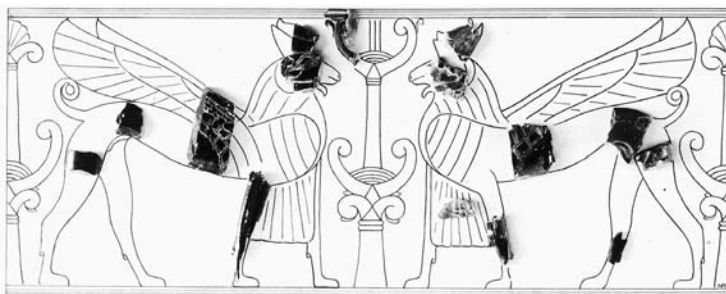
Figure 29. Samaria, *à jour* ivory plaque, reconstructed: 2 ram-sphinxes
opposite tree. (est. ht. 14 cm)

Figure 31. Arslan Tash, *à jour* ivory
plaque fragment: forequarters of
winged sphinx. (Louvre AO 11475;
ht. 8.7 cm)

Figure 30. Samaria, *à jour* ivory
plaque: winged sphinx. (Jerusalem,
Israel Museum 33.2566;
7.0 × 7.5 cm)

Figure 32. Arslan Tash, ivory plaque: frontal-faced sphinx. (Aleppo Museum; 7.8 × 5.7 cm)

Figure 33. Khorsabad, *à jour* ivory plaque fragments: frontal-faced sphinx. (Chicago, Oriental Institute DS 1017.14; 9.5 × 11.4 cm)

Figure 34. Nimrud, *à jour* ivory plaque fragment: frontal-faced sphinx, Room SW37, Fort Shalmaneser. (Ashmolean 1962.306; 9.6 × 7.5 cm)

Figure 35. Khorsabad, ivory plaque: woman at window, Room 13, Nabu Temple. (Chicago, Oriental Institute DS 1017.01; 10.1 cm sq)

Figure 36. Arslan Tash, ivory plaque: woman at window. (Louvre AO 11459; 7.9 × 8.5 cm)
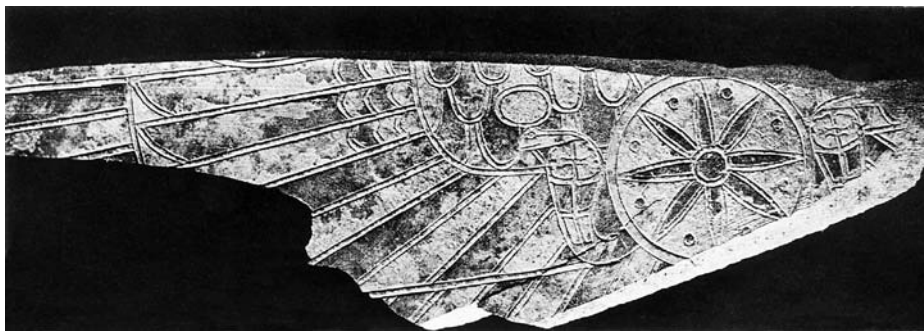
Figure 37. Arslan Tash, incised and stained ivory plaque fragment: winged
uraeus-disc. (Aleppo Museum; 24.5 cm)

Figure 38. Nimrud, carved and stained ivory blinker: frontal-faced winged
sphinx Room SW37, Fort Shalmaneser. (Institute of Archaeology,
London; = ND 10399; 13 cm)

Figure 39. Nimrud, incised and stained ivory plaque fragment: interlace
plant pattern Room NW21, Fort Shalmaneser. (= ND 10613; 7.9 + 5.6 cm)

Figure 40. Arslan Tash, *à jour* ivory plaque: drooping palm. (Louvre AO 11485; 10.4 × 6 cm)

Figure 41. Samaria, *à jour* ivory plaque: drooping palm. (Jerusalem, Israel Museum; 9.6 × 6.1 cm)

Figure 43. Arslan Tash, ivory furniture support. (Louvre AO 11484; ht. 13.8 cm)

Figure 42. Khorsabad, ivory furniture support: Room 23 of Residence K. (Chicago, Oriental Institute DS 1017.29; ht. 6.7 cm)
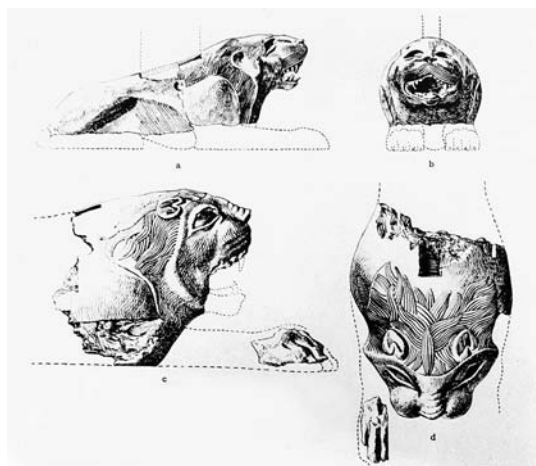
Figure 44. Zincirli, ivory furniture attachment:
crouching lion, drawings. (Berlin Museum,
S3887; 12.5 × 7 cm)

Figure 45. Thasos, ivory furniture
attachment: crouching lion. (National
Museum, Athens)
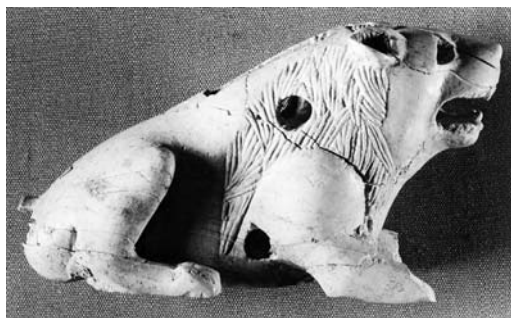
Figure 46. and 47. Samaria, ivory furniture attachments: crouching lions.
(Jerusalem, Israel Museum 33.2557 and 2558; 7.8 × 3.9 cm)

Figure 48. Zincirli, 3-sided ivory furniture support: egyptianizing figures. (Berlin Museum, S3879; ht. 13.3 cm)
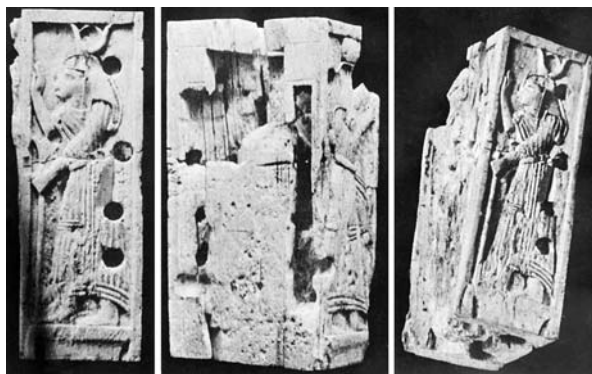
Figure 49. Nimrud, 3-sided ivory furniture support: egyptianizing figures. Room FF, Northwest Palace. (= ND 768; 7 × 3.8 × 2.5 cm)

Figure 50. Samaria, ivory plaque fragment: hand holding *nb* bowl and *wadjet* eye. (max. w. 2.6 cm)

Figure 51. Samaria, *à jour* ivory plaque fragment: long skirt with beaded border and vertical striations. (max. ht. pres. 3.2 cm)

NORTH SYRIA AS A BRONZEWORKING CENTRE IN THE EARLY FIRST MILLENNIUM B.C.: LUXURY COMMODITIES AT HOME AND ABROAD

In the initial charge to participants for the present colloquium on "Bronzeworking Centres of Western Asia c. 1000 B.C.–539 B.C.", we were asked to determine (a) whether one's particular area had a flourishing bronze-producing industry in the period, (b) what sort of material it was producing, and (c) how much of that material was being exported. In the case of North Syria, the evidence is strongly in support of conclusions that the region did indeed have a flourishing bronze industry; that, due to the incomplete nature of the archaeological record and the re-usable properties of bronze, probably only a partial typology of materials is possible at this time, but there is nonetheless a considerable range of utilitarian and luxury goods being produced; and finally, that the distribution of these goods is sufficiently wide to suggest that North Syrian bronzes were not only being exported, but were highly valued throughout the ancient world.[1]

In order to substantiate these claims, it will be necessary to first, define the region we would include within the boundaries of North Syria; second, identify the corpus, and within that, the typological categories of North Syrian bronzes; and third, elucidate the evidence for reconstructing the economic factors involved in production and consumption of these bronzes.

---

* This article originally appeared as "North Syria as a Bronzeworking Centre in the Early First Millenium BC: Luxury Commodities at Home and Abroad," in *Bronzeworking Centres of Western Asia c. 1000–539 B.C.*, John Curtis ed., London: Kegan Paul International Limited, 1988, pp. 193–225.

[1] The present paper owes much to the comments of Peter Calmeyer, Robert C. Hunt and Oscar White Muscarella. The North Syrian attributions of most of the objects to be discussed have been made before, notably by R. D. Barnett, H.-V. Herrmann and O. W. Muscarella. I have therefore seen my role here mainly as a typologist and synthesist, with a reconstruction of the social and economic context of the manufacture and consumption of these bronzes, as permissible given limited evidence, being my primary task.

I. *The Region*

For purposes of the present paper, I would define the core area of
North Syria in the early first millennium B.C. as bounded on the west
by the range of the Amanus mountains, on the north by the Taurus
mountains, on the east by the Euphrates River, and on the south by a
line extending from the northern bend of the Orontes River across the
Jebel Zawiyeh. This would include the regions of the plains of Jerablus,
Kuweik and the Amuq, the valley of the Kara Su, the plain of Marash,
and the foothills of the Kurd Dagh.[2] Historical reference would thus be
to the states of Carchemish, Arpad, Patina/Unki, Sam'al, Gurgum and
Kummuḫ. Natural sub-divisions within the region led to each of these
states being relatively autonomous units controlling at least one urban
polity plus surrounding towns, villages, radiating routes and hinterland,
except when threatened by external forces or combined artificially into
provinces by outside powers.

   The evidence supporting this tight definition of central North Syria
comes both from geographical features, and from historical sources,
such as which states were consistently involved jointly in the northern
coalition against incursions by the Assyrians, or the dividing lines of
provinces in the Ottoman Empire.[3]

   Neighboring states, such as Guzana (Tell Halaf), Hadatu (Arslan
Tash), Bit Adini (Til Barsib), Milid (Malatya), Que (Cilicia) and
Hamath (Hama) would then be viewed as closely related kingdoms on
the periphery of North Syria proper, swing-states that were sometimes
allied with the core, sometimes oriented outward during this period,
depending upon historical circumstances.

---

   [2] For the archaeological surveys conducted in this region, see Braidwood 1937,
Seton-Williams 1954 and Mathers (ed.) 1981.
   [3] Arguments for this definition are presented in my doctoral dissertation on North
Syrian ivories (cf. Winter 1973: chs. 1–2).

II. *Corpus and Typology*[4]

A. *Tools and Weapons*

That tools and weapons of bronze continued to be manufactured into the period we call the "Iron Age" is most poignantly attested in the account by the Assyrian king, Assurnasirpal II (883–856 B.C.), of his difficult passage across Mt Kashiari: "with axes of iron and with picks of bronze, I hewed a path…" (Grayson 1976: S 635).[5] Both metals were clearly in use at the same time, the tensile properties of bronze not having been superseded by the strength of iron.[6]

Our problem is constructing a good typology of weapon and tool types of North Syria lies partly in excavation and publication strategies of early expeditions, where attention was mainly focused upon architecture and sculpture. At sites like Zincirli (Sam'al) and Tell Halaf (Guzana), while we do have assorted arrowheads, spear-butts, axe-blades, etc preserved (cf. Hrouda 1962: pls. 36–7), excavation was mainly on

---

[4] Only the grossest typology is here intended. For important discussions of the problems of classification of archaeological artifacts, see both Read 1982 and Brown 1982. It should be noted, with Read 1982: 61, that "artifact types define artifact classes…Neither an artifact nor a group of artifacts constitutes a unit, but rather a unit is a class to which an artifact belongs". In the present case, it will be seen that I am making a gross division between "functional" and "luxury" objects, including tools and weapons in the former, and decorative objects in the latter, sub-divided into a number of sub-classes. I would say, however, that the basis of these divisions needs further consideration in another context than the present conference.

[5] Note Grayson translates *urudu* as "copper", whereas in the earlier edition by Luckenbill (1926–7: I, S 461), the term is translated as "bronze" (cf. Dalley and Brinkman, this volume, on the inconsistencies in Assyrian texts referring to either copper or bronze). In this case Luckenbill's translation is the more accurate, as copper could not be used in an unalloyed state to hew anything. Once the alloying became a steady metallurgical practice, its presence IN the copper was probably taken for granted, and since standard alloys only range from ca. 6 to 10% it is not unlikely that the total metal was still known by the generic term for the copper that comprised the remaining 94–90%.

[6] This is certainly true from the archaeological evidence. At Tell Rifa'at, for example, scale armor in both bronze and iron was discovered together in Level II (Seton-Williams 1967: 25), as well as knife-blades and arrowheads in both materials. At Tell Halaf, Oppenheim (1931: 190) reports a moveable hearth constructed jointly of bronze and iron. See the discussion in Wheeler and Maddin 1980: 113–25, on the conditions under which it became feasible for iron to replace bronze. Indeed, Moorey has noted (1985: 33) that it was not until the Neo-Babylonian period that production of iron became cheaper than that of copper/bronze, so that certain objects would have continued to be produced in bronze when resources were limited, even if iron were the preferred material. The higher energy costs in working iron over bronze may also have been a factor, as discussed in Åstrom *et al*. 1986: esp. 28–9.

the citadel, in elite residences, and both the range and the quantity of weapons and tools discovered was limited. With the exception of the material studied by Moorey (1980) from Deve Hüyük, we have virtually no graves or workshop-areas providing moulds or blanks, such as has been preserved from sites like Tell Mardikh in North Syria for the early second millennium (cf. Weiss 1985: no. 118). If we are not to have new excavated material, at least a good study of the evidence already collected from first millennium sites is badly needed, before we can begin to assess North Syrian production.[7]

To the extent that helmets fall into the category of "weapons", we do have two discovered at Zincirli, one of which has an embossed decoration around the base that includes a good "North Syrian style" winged sundisk (von Luschan 1943: figs. 83–4; I understand from Peter Calmeyer that these helmets have since disintegrated, and are no longer available for study). So that, despite the general similarity of pointed helmets in bronze throughout the Near East in the period (e.g. from Cyprus and Hasanlu, and as represented on Assyrian reliefs), we may suggest that North Syria was producing its own armor. Richard Barnett used inscription as the basis of his argument that at least some of a group of bi-metallic mace-heads discovered at Nimrud come from North Syria: one in particular inscribed with the name of Mati'el, ruler of Arpad in the second half of the 8th century B.C. (Barnett 1967: 5, pl. 8: 1). A number of similar pieces from Zincirli help to substantiate their North Syrian origin (von Luschan 1943: fig. 107, pl. 42), and have occasioned the attribution of similar finds from Samos to North Syria as well (Jantzen 1972: pl. 50), although Muscarella has charted the wide distribution of these objects, and cautions us to withhold the specific "North Syrian" label pending further evidence (1973: 236). Furthermore, since both stylistic and inscriptional evidence can be argued to be circumstantial, with objects manufactured by some external party and then decorated or inscribed within the home territory, until a typology of weapons found at North Syrian sites is attempted, we are not in position to discuss their production *within* North Syria.

---

[7] It will be noted that I have not included fibulae, either under the heading of tools and weapons or as "luxury" goods. For an account of bronze fibulae found and examples represented in North Syrian sculpture, see Muscarella 1967; but since specifically North Syrian types have not been elucidated with precision, the class has not been discussed.

B. *"Luxury" Goods*

I use this term because it has a place of long-standing in the literature; but I should qualify it by stating at the outset that what I mean by luxury goods here is an object that has either been made of a particular material or "embellished" with particular decoration, such that the cost in time, energy, and/or materials is greater than that required for the purely utilitarian function of the object (i.e., decorated as opposed to undecorated bowls; bronze as opposed to pottery beakers). There are however serious culturo-centric assumptions bedded in this definition, for who is to say that the decoration of equestrian ornaments, for example, was not considered an integral part of their functional utility in ancient times? Nevertheless, since the vast majority of these embellished goods from excavated contexts have come from highly elite locations, such as palaces and sanctuaries, I think we can use the term as long as its dangers are noted. I am most attracted by the recent suggestion of Arjun Appadurai (1986: 38) that we regard "luxury goods not in contrast to "necessities", but rather as things "whose principal use is *rhetorical* and *social*"; goods that are in themselves, "incarnated signs".

The major problem that faces us in providing criteria for identifying the corpus of North Syrian luxury goods in bronze in this period, and the categories for their division into a working typology, is that so few objects attributed to North Syria in the scholarly literature to date have actually been excavated within the area. These include one equestrian frontlet from Tell Tainat (Kantor 1962); one equestrian blinker and two chariot-pole ornaments from Zincirli (von Luschan 1943: figs. 90–1, 152); a pair of bull protome cauldron handle-attachments from Tell Rifa'at (Seton-Williams 1961: pl. 41: 14), and another from Zinjirli (von Luschan 1943: pl. 49 g); and a free standing male figurine said to be from Marash (Kyrieleis 1966: pl. 3). Four of the major North Syrian states are thus represented: Patina, Sam'al, Arpad and Gurgum. But for the rest of the preserved bronzes, they either come from excavated contexts outside of North Syria, or else they are the issue of the art market, with no provenience at all.

Some of these objects have been attributed to the region on the basis of inscription, as the Mati'el macehead; others on the basis of "style" (see on this, discussion in Muscarella 1970: 109–26). Problems inherent in the first case were noted above. What has permitted attributions in the second case is comparison with sculptural monuments at North Syrian sites, on the assumption that the iconographic repertoire and

stylistic characteristics of fixed monuments are likely to reflect local work. Although specialized craftsmen can certainly be imported to work on major buildings (witness the Phoenician workers brought in not only to build, but to decorate Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem), this correlation between movable and fixed monuments is generally an acceptable line of argument, when, as for North Syrian consistencies in monuments across the area can be observed to constitute a definable "regional style" (cf. discussion in Winter 1983: 185). But this rigorous comparison between fixed monuments and movable objects must also be applied to works found within the culture-area—like the excavated pieces from Tell Tainat, Rifa'at and Zincirli noted above; for, just as it is possible for North Syrian objects to be found outside of North Syria, it is equally possible for objects of foreign manufacture to have been imported in.

These caveats notwithstanding, I have tentatively isolated six typological categories for bronze objects that may be attributed to North Syrian manufacture in the early first millennium: 1. Equestrian ornaments; 2. Vessels; 3. Plaques; 4. Personal ornaments; 5. Three-dimensional sculpture; and 6. Weights.

1. *Equestrian Ornaments*

a. *Frontlets and Blinkers*
A number of inverted trapezoidal or triangular metal plaques identified as horses' frontlets, and spade-shaped plaques identified as horses' blinkers have been attributed to North Syria. We are fortunate in knowing exactly how these ornaments were worn, thanks to their representation on contemporary sculpture—most particularly, a stone horse's head preserved from the Iron Age citadel of Zincirli (fig. 1, a & b; = von Luschan 1911: figs. 248–9). Kantor was able to use that head to properly identify the Tell Tainat frontlet (fig. 2, a & b; cf. Kantor 1962: 95). She further compared the main motif of a hero grasping the tails of animals, to a relief from the Herald's Wall of the 10th or 9th century at Carchemish (Orthmann 1971: pl. 26a; see de Schauensee, this volume, fig. 25), and the subsidiary motif of two nude females holding their breasts, to a relief from the 9th century Long Wall at the same site (fig. 3; = Orthmann 1971: pl. 24b). She was then able to determine that the piece was indeed "at home" in the cultural region in which it was found, although she did not try to go further and suggest at precisely what North Syrian center it might have been manufactured (1962: 105).

The subsidiary motif also allows us to see some unity between bronze frontlets and similar objects of ivory (e.g. from Gordion: Young 1962: pl. 46, also thought to be of North Syria manufacture), suggesting thereby that the iconography—which happens also to be identical with that depicted on the Zincirli horse's head—must have been carefully selected and is consistent across media.

Isolation not only of the motif, but also of the stylistic features of its rendering, permits attribution of a number of frontlets found outside the immediate region to North Syria as well (cf. study of Barnett 1964). Primary among these is the bronze plaque with three adjacent nude females found in the Heraion at Samos (Buschor 1959). Another, from Miletus, is less-well preserved, but clearly related (cf. Kantor 1962: 108–9 and Barnett 1964). A third frontlet, also from Miletus and showing a triangular composition of three rampant lions, can be added to this group—first because the size, proportions and tooling of the border of the plaque is identical with the Samos frontlet, second because the relief technique closely parallels the other examples, and third because the lions themselves can be related stylistically to the lion-heads on which the Tell Tainat women stand. Finally, a plaque formerly in the Bomford Collection and now housed in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, must be included in this group on the bases of shape, motif and style, and at the same time expands our repertoire to include the two heroes who stand on lions on either side of the nude females (Barnett 1964: pl. 2: 3).

The Bomford plaque, along with the Tell Tainat frontlet, allows us to extend the North Syrian designation to a bronze blinker said to have been found in Eretria, showing a kilted male hero holding two reversed lions by the hind legs (fig. 4 = Muscarella 1970: fig. 10). A similarly spade-shaped blinker was apparently found at Zincirli, decorated with a winged sphinx. Unfortunately, the object itself seems not to have been preserved, and it is impossible to tell much of its style from the published drawing (von Luschan 1943: fig. 152). Nevertheless, it is of the same general shape, and of the same motif as the blinker depicted on the Zincirli horse. The motif appears as well in Assyrian representations of decorated blinkers on reliefs of Assurnasirpal II at Nimrud (fig. 5 = Layard 1849: pl. 2A).[8]

---

[8] Assyrian horses also wear shoulder ornaments, as seen on the reliefs of Assurnasirpal (Layard 1849: pl. 2A, for example). While no such ornaments have been preserved in North Syrian contexts, one candidate for inclusion in the group is a bronze ornament from Salamis in Cyprus, dated to the 8th century B.C. (Karageorghis 1973:

This consonance of motifs suggests that not only across media, but also across polities of the Ancient Near East in this period, there was a shared culture of appropriate imagery associated with specific classes of objects.[9]

b. *Chariot Ornaments*

Two chariot-pole ornaments of hammered bronze were found at Zincirli (von Luschan 1943: figs. 90–1, pl. 40c–d), the styles and motifs of both of which link them to the group of equestrian ornaments delineated above. The first, although very fragmentarily preserved, apparently bore a design of two rampant lions flanking some central motif, the curves of the lions' tails and hindquarters rendered very much like those of the second Miletus frontlet. The other chariot-pole ornament is somewhat better preserved; within the central panel is a nude female holding a reversed lion in each hand while standing upon a third (fig. 6). Once again, the theme is found on equestrian ornaments, particularly on ivory frontlets from Gordion, which may also be attributed to North Syrian manufacture (cf. Winter 1973: 317–21).

These ornaments were set on the chariot yoke-pole that passed between the two horses hitched to the vehicle. Their use is apparent from Assyrian chariots, as depicted on reliefs of Assurbanipal from Nineveh and of Sargon II from Khorsabad (cf. fig. 7 = Barnett 1976: pl. 35; Botta and Flandin 1849: pl. 158; and see reconstruction drawing in von Luschan 1943: fig. 97). The Assurbanipal reliefs have been so carefully executed it is possible to see that the motif is similar to North Syrian equestrian ornaments—a woman standing upon lions—although the style in which the motif was rendered on the Assyrian examples was clearly Assyrian and not North Syrian, as witnessed by the fact that she is clothed, and stands upon a pair of lions, while holding none in hand.

Therefore, we would emphasize that "style" must take precedence over "iconography" in arguments regarding attribution, since it is clear

---

pl. 89), on which the central nude female and winged sundisk over her head can be related stylistically to other NS works. Since this ornament was found in association with a horse skeleton in a tomb—i.e., not stored, as in the Assyrian palaces, it further reinforces the assumption that such works were valued and used outside of the North Syrian homeland.

    [9] A study of the iconography of equestrian ornaments is in progress by the present author, the beginnings of which are contained in Winter 1973: 316–34.

that a number of the cultures of first millennium Western Asia shared motifs, and probably meaning, in certain classes of objects.

2. *Vessels*

a. *Cauldrons*

From the Great Tumulus at Gordion and the tombs of Salamis, to representations of the facade of the Urartean temple of Ḫaldi at Musasir, it is clear that large bronze cauldrons with or without human- or exotic animal-protomes as handle-attachments were highly-esteemed artifacts of the ancient world (cf. fig. 8, from Gordion = Young 1981: pls. 54–7).

In dealing with cauldrons having human-headed handle attachments, close attention has been paid to the stylistic features of faces to determine place of manufacture—as in cases where the hairstyle and expression is clearly related to archaic period Greek sculpture. Over the past 25 years it has also become evident that a substantial number must be attributed to North Syrian workmanship.

Pioneering work in this regard has been done by Herrmann (1966) and Muscarella (1962, 1970), work made particularly important by the fact that no human-headed attachments have been found in North Syria itself. Herrmann has based his attributions of cauldrons and cauldron attachments found in the Zeus sanctuary at Olympia (fig. 9, a & b = Herrmann 1966: A12) on parallels with North Syrian reliefs. He has paired a set of male-attachments with 9th century representations on reliefs from Zincirli, and of different female-attachments with 9th century reliefs of Carchemish and 8th century reliefs of Sakçe Gözü—a site in the Kara Su Valley, on the outskirts of both Sam'al and Kummuḫ.[10]

Herrmann has gone so far as to insist that the parallels he observes with reliefs of different North Syrian sites reflect the actual centres of

---

[10] Earlier suggestions that these attachments were to be attributed to Urartean workshops have had to be abandoned. Even the siren attachment in Berlin, often said to have been found at Van, has recently been shown to be without secure provenience (Wartke 1985: esp. 91), so in fact there are no examples of siren attachments at all actually excavated in Urartean territory (I owe this reference to O. W. Muscarella, and have profitted from discussion of the point with him and with Peter Calmeyer). The easternmost excavated siren attachment, and the one found closest to Urartu, is that from Caucasian Alishar on the Iranian side of the Araxes River (cf. Piotrovsky 1969: figs. 103–5).

manufacture of specific pieces, and hence to posit multiple centres of production within North Syria for these bronze cauldron fittings. I have suggested just such a scenario for the production of ivory in this same period (cf. Winter 1976a, 1976b, 1977 and 1983), and a similar conclusion for the bronzes would not be out of the question, providing we could demonstrate coherent stylistic sub-groups.

The bull-attachments documented as coming from Tell Rifa'at (ancient Arpad) and from Zincirli have been poorly published in drawings (cf. Seton-Williams 1961: pl. 41: 14). The Rifa'at attachments should prove important for our purposes, as they do come from a stratified context in level IIb, representing the Aramaean/Assyrian phase, from the 9th to the 7th century Seton-Williams 1967: 18). What is badly needed at this juncture is a study of both the Rifa'at and the Zincirli bulls, to permit comparison with each other as well as with fixed monuments and objects of North Syrian style in other media, and then with bull attachments found outside of North Syria, as from Olympia (Herrmann 1966: pls. 48–50), Cumae (Boardman 1980: fig. 42), Altintepe (Piotrovsky 1969: fig. 108) and Gordion (Young 1981: MM1, pls. 51–3 2nd W1 & 2, pls. 87–8). Until this is done, I would hold, with Muscarella, that we can only refer to these objects as generalized "Near Easttern" (1968: 18). But I would also point out that bull-protomes copied in clay have been found belonging to cauldron-shaped pots in 9th century levels in Palestine (cf. Mazar *et al.*, 1964: fig. 11: 9, pl. 14E–F, as well as two unpublished examples excavated by Calloway at Ai Radanah); and this *might* serve as an argument that poorer regions on the periphery of major Syrian centres were imitating the costly materials of their wealthier northern neighbours.

b. *Bowls*

The round faces, sausage-curls and segmented wings of siren cauldron attachments have also served to identify as North Syrian a pair of *à-jour* relief plaques in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum, New York, and a bowl in the University Museum, Phildelphia—both of which show pairs of winged sphinxes (cf. Kantor 1962: fig. 6; Young 1967); and to these may be added a fragment of a bronze bowl from Olympia (Herrmann 1966: pl. 76). The peculiar, flame-shaped markings on the haunches of the Metropolitan sphinxes compare closely with similar markings on ivories of North Syrian style; but even more important, these same markings appear on a clay plaque from Zincirli

(von Luschan 1943: pls. 9i & 10a) that also serves to link the ivories to the region. The clay plaque, then, precisely because it is NOT in a precious material, and thus is less likely to have been imported into North Syria as a luxury, is one of the strongest arguments we have, in addition to the style of the reliefs, for suggesting that these stylistic elements constitute the local, regional style of North Syria.

No bronze bowl in North Syrian style has been excavated within North Syria. Nevertheless, a number of the extraordinary hoard of bronze vessels found by Layard in the Northwest Palace at Nimrud were attributed quite early on to North Syrian manufacture (cf. Poulsen 1912: 16). Barnett has shown that certain of the Nimrud bowls must represent Phoenician workmanship and imagery as distinct from the Syrian examples (1935: 201–4); and has posited a third, South Syrian or Aramaean group, to be equally distinguished from those of the north (Barnett 1967). The grounds upon which he would define this third group are mainly the Aramaean inscriptions found on the sides of certain of the bowls; yet I would also say that one could argue their South Syrian origin on the basis of style (cf. Winter 1981: 104ff.).

For those vessels from the Nimrud hoard designated as North Syrian, attributions have been made after comparisons with more securely-attributed objects, such as ivories—using both style and motifs, as with a hero combatting lions, compared to an ivory pyxis in North Syrian style also from Nimrud (cf. fig. 10 = Layard 1853a, pl. 64; Barnett 1957: S 2, 4 & 20).

This attribution in particular has led to consideration of other bowls, particularly from the West, as equally of North Syrian manufacture. The bronze bowl from Idalion on Cyprus, for example, with its procession of women and musicians (Gjerstad 1946: pl. I), is so comparable to North Syrian ivory pyxides that if it is not North Syrian, it has been done under very strong North Syrian influence. The Kerameikos bowl, with its similar women in long, striated garments holding flower-blossoms and the tails of stylized lions (cf. Kübler 1954: pl. 162), not unlike the Tell Tainat plaque, has almost universally been designated as truly North Syrian in manufacture. And finally, the controversial "Olympia" bowl, with its lions, plants and kilted, kneeling hero (Poulsen 1912: figs. 12–13), at least has been formed with North Syrian models in mind. Of these, the Kerameikos bowl is by far the most important, because it is found in a closed tomb, in which associated pottery permits a date in the 9th century B.C. As long as the Greek Geometric pottery chronology

holds (cf. on this, Francis and Vickers 1985), the Kerameikos bowl then becomes crucial evidence for both early North Syrian production of decorated metal vessels and also early export to the West.

3. *Plaques*

Mention must be made at this point of another class of objects—that of hammered sheet metal, done in repoussé technique not unrelated to that of the bowls. I speak of the fragments that have been published from the site of Olympia, where strips of metal originally thought to have been part of door-decorations, were apparently bands riveted to a female statue as part of her overgarment.[11] Only a very few of these have been published. One shows a striding male figure in wrapped garment so like the representation of a "king" from the palace reliefs of Sakçe Gözü in both style and content as to argue for direct North Syrian workmanship (Kunze 1956: fig. 38; Orthmann 1971: pl. 49d). A second fragment, of an animal combat (Daux 1960: fig. 6), is more difficult to determine from the published photograph, but certainly the combat theme has many parallels in the North Syrian repertoire. Others have been referred to by Muscarella (1970: 116–7), and I understand there is much more awaiting publication. Once these works are better known, we will be in a position to assess not only the possibility of execution by North Syrian craftsmen and what their original use might have been, but also the evaluation of whether craftsmen might originally have been called to Greece to execute commissions according to their patrons' concerns, or whether the strips represent Near Eastern products used later by Greeks for their own ends.

In anticipation of the Olympia publication, the planned re-examination of the Nimrud bowls by John Curtis and the analytical staff of the British Museum, with full publication of the wonderful watercolour drawings made at the time of excavation, is eagerly awaited, so that greater precision in the classes of Phoenician, South Syrian and North Syrian repoussé metal vessels and plaques may be achieved.

---

[11] I am grateful to Peter Calmeyer for this information. The plaques are to be published by Mrs Rittig; preliminary study suggests that there are at least three or four distinct stylistic groups among these fragments and two different types of rivets used to attach them—all of which implies that they may well have been door-bands to begin with, or at least that their use on the statue was secondary, if not tertiary.

4. *Personal Ornaments*

This class of objects is rather unusual in that it presently has no members. A number of small pendants with loops for suspension have been found at Zincirli, executed in precious metals. A sub-triangular silver pendant shows a nude female, as on many of the equestrian ornaments (cf. von Luschan 1943: pl. 47c), suggesting shared themes of human and equestrian adornment, as well as perhaps protection. A square gold pendant shows a seated, clothed female before a piled table (*ibid.*, pl. 47d), a theme related in style and iconography to a number of ivories of North Syrian style (e.g. Barnett 1957), as well as to a carved stone stele from the same site (Orthmann 1971: pl. 66d). A third pendant in good North Syrian style, made of silver (von Luschan 1943: pl. 47e) shows facing male and female figures whose heads are covered in gold foil.

It is possible that bronze ornaments were also made and used in lieu of pieces in more costly metal, presumably as a function of the economic means of the owner. Therefore, I would keep this category open, since there seems to be shared iconography between equestrian ornaments and those intended for personal wear. We would want to know whether silver and gold were reserved for human use, or just for elite use, given the palace find-spots of these particular ornaments. Certainly the rich sheen and warm golden-brown colour of the original bronze could have had its own appeal in antiquity, and we must await new information from the archaeological record.

5. *Three-Dimensional Sculpture*

A bronze statuette of a bull without provenience has been published by Roger Moorey as "North Syrian, made under strong Urartean influence" (1971: 90–91). I would not only agree with his designation, but further suggest that it may well have been manufactured at Carchemish, where the bulls of the column base found in the temple of the Storm God (Orthmann 1971: pl. 25e) show a similar heaviness of body and forward thrust of the head. Its date of manufacture would be most likely during the regency of Yariris, during which time we know that Urartu was an important factor in the state's foreign relations. Furthermore, the goat in the relief of the Yariris buttress (cf. drawing in Akurgal 1968: fig. 97) displays the same combination of North Syrian traits along with Urartean linear patterning on the body. The inclusion in a booty list of Assurnasirpal II of copper/bronze "wild oxen" from both Carchemish and Kummuḫ (Luckenbill 1926–7: I S 460, 474) along with copper/bronze vessels and bowls further suggest that some sort of

three-dimensional bull-objects were being made in the area, whether of this scale or as monumental column-bases, of the sort manufactured in Assyria some 150 years later by Sennacherib.

I would imagine that there was once a rather large class of bronze figurines or small statuary from North Syria; but that both accidents of the archaeological record and the practice of melting down especially divine figures has obscured the significance of the class. At least one bronze figure of a warrior, likely a god, is said to come from Marash (Kyrieleis 1966: pl. 3); and another, more clearly of a weather god, has turned up in the Heraion on Samos (Kopcke 1963: pl. 122).

Two draped caryatid stands in bronze, purchased on the market, have also been attributed by Moorey to North Syrian manufacture, with strongest parallels in works of the seventh century (1973: 90). One figure, in the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek in Copenhagen, certainly has affinities both with siren cauldron attachments and with the Metropolitan sphinxes in facial features. If these caryatid stands are indeed to be dated as late as the 7th century, as Moorey has suggested, this would have important consequences for our understanding of North Syrian production, to be discussed further below.

6. *Weights*

A bronze weight in the form of a couchant female sphinx, currently in the collection of the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, has been attributed to Hamath on the basis of the inscribed name of that site on the underside (Bordreuil 1983). The entire inscription reads "two sicles of Hamath", demarcating its weight. Other inscribed animal weights have been discussed by Bron and Lemaire (1983).[12] It is certainly to be expected that weights for metal equivalents would have to be in metal; and one such weight—a lion in good 8th century Assyrian style—is known from Sargon's capital of Khorsabad (Botta and Flandin 1849: pl. 151). The sphinx has close stylistic affinities in hairstyle and facial physiognomy to some of the cauldron attachments, as well as to the Copenhagen stand discussed above. It is therefore quite at home in the "North Syrian" group of decorated metal works of the early first millennium. If we are to actually suggest its manufacture in Hamath on the basis of the inscription, it opens up the whole question of the

---

[12] In addition, an unpublished bronze weight in a private collection in London, inscribed "one sicle of Hamath", was reported to me by Dan Barag.

political and cultural affinities of that state with North, as opposed to South, Syria—a question too large for the present discussion. I would prefer to note that at different times the state of Hamath was allied in both directions, and so it is perfectly possible that the weight could have come from a Hamathite workshop. Nevertheless, we cannot base other attributions to Hamath on this one without further evidence. One of the prime values of this sphinx is that it provides a *terminus ante quem* for objects of related style, since Hamath as an independent state with its own weight system presumably ceased to exist after its conquest by Sargon II in 720 B.C. This would also accord well with the epigraphic evidence, as Bordreuil would date the letter-forms to ca. 750. We thus have an approximate date of the third quarter of the 8th century for not only the weight, but for the style.

III. *Economic Factors*

A. *Production*

With at least a preliminary corpus of "embellished" metal objects attributed to North Syrian manufacture established, we may now proceed to an investigation of the economic factors involved in bronze-production, as well as those factors governing export and the consumption of North Syrian works. There are essentially three such factors involved in production: first, access to raw materials and the means to acquire them; second, the availability of sufficient fuels to maintain production, which in metal-working entails high-temperature fires for both smelting and melting; and third, sufficient skilled labor organized to carry out the manufacture.

1. *Access to Raw Materials*

Based upon what we know today of the geological deposits of copper and tin, the alloying of which produced bronze, the region we would define as nuclear North Syria did not possess substantial quantities of either metal (cf. Toll 1921). Therefore, North Syria had to depend for its needs on metal-rich areas outside: upon either sufficient political coercion or material wealth for acquisition, and upon open routes of access for transport.

This would essentially mean access either west to the important sources of copper in Cyprus, or north and northwest, to the rich

deposits of Anatolia. That Cypriote copper was reaching the Levant, and even southern Babylonia, at least by the early second millennium, is well-established (cf. Muhly 1973 and 1976; Millard 1973). The only question for the first millennium would therefore be in the realm of any intervening historical constraints, such as competition diverting or warfare closing access to the Cypriote sources.

For the Anatolian sources, a number of studies in recent years have mapped not only the deposits of metal in the eastern Taurus (cf. Khanzadian 1926; Stchepinsky 1944; US Operations, Mission to Turkey 1960), but also their exploitation in antiquity (Birgi 1951: Puglisi and Palmieri 1968; de Jesus 1978, 1980, 1981; Gale *et al.* 1985; Moorey 1985). Most of these studies have understandably concentrated upon the exploitation of resources in the initial stages of the Bronze Age (i.e., Giles and Kuijpers 1974; Yakar 1985; Stos-Gale *et al.* 1984; and from a more cultural perspective, Renfrew 1986), just as work on iron metallurgy has tended to concentrate on its early stages (see Maddin *et al.* 1977, and more recently, Muhly *et al.* 1985).[13]

As far as tin is concerned, long-standing debates have disputed the likelihood of sources in Iran, Afghanistan and the Trans-Caucasus (Crawford 1974; Franklin *et al.* 1978; Cleuziou and Berthoud 1982; Ryzanov 1979; and see also the exchange documented in Muhly and Wertime 1973). However, now that we know from the important work of Aslihan Yener that there were significant deposits of tin, in addition to the other metals, in the Bolkardag district of the Taurus mountains, and that these deposits were indeed being worked in antiquity (cf. Yener, in press; thus confirming the suppositions of Muhly and Wertime 1973: 119), all of the ingredients for North Syrian bronze were within reach, if not at hand.

That the various states of North Syria in fact had access to large quantities of metal is evident from contemporary Assyrian and Urartean accounts of tribute and booty received. Malatya and Cilicia, defined above as peripheral states oftentimes allied with the North Syrian core, clearly were sitting much closer to, if not directly upon the metal sources, and this is reflected in the Assyrian accounts (cf. Luckenbill 1926–7: I S 636; 1927: S 27, 45; König 1955–7: 117, 130; and discussion in

---

[13] Important studies of the first millennium, particularly with regard to Assyria, have focused almost exclusively on iron sources and technology, despite the prevalence and importance of the continued use of bronze (Maxwell-Hyslop 1974; Pleiner and Bjorkman 1974; Curtis *et al.* 1979). But see below, note 14.

Winter 1973: 60, 64, 115, 500). But it is also the case that Carchemish and Patina in the time of Assurnasirpal II and Shalmaneser III had amassed large quantities of copper, and some tin, in addition to silver, gold and iron. Although Sam'al, as a considerably smaller state, gave less quantity, it was not without its share of copper, iron and silver as well (Luckenbill 1926–7: I, S 476–7, 501). And Sargon II's gift of Malatya to Mutallu of Kummuḫ (Luckenbill 1926–7: II, S 26) would have had a serious impact on the latter state's control of significant resources, albeit short-lived (Luckenbill 1926–7: II, S 45).

This documentation confirms that at least three of the major states of North Syria could have had both access to and sufficient quantities of raw materials to support a local bronze industry. In fact, I have argued elsewhere (1973: 451–3) that shifts in quantity of Assyrian tribute from Carchemish and Patina, as reflected in the lists of Assurnasirpal and Shalmaneser, may be significant. Carchemish gives Assurnasirpal 100 talents of copper, Patina none; but in the following reign, Patina provides 300 talents to Shalmaneser, as opposed to only 30 from Carchemish. While this may be merely a scribal error, the fact that 1000 copper vessels form part of the tribute paid by Patina, balanced against 500 (presumably iron) weapons from Carchemish, combined with the fact that Patina is the North Syrian state with easiest access to the coast and that quantities of Cypriote pottery have been found both at Al Mina, especially level VIII, and in the Amuq sites, lead one to suggest that—whatever supplies may have been coming from Anatolia—Cypriote copper was also available, with Patina as a major recipient.[14]

Ideally, one would wish to subject a broad array of so-called "North Syrian" bronzes to metallurgical analysis, with a view toward identifying original metal sources. However, in reality, there are significant problems. As Muhly has noted (Röllig and Muhly 1983: 357–8), there is at present no way to distinguish virgin from re-used metal, while the melting down of scrap and new additions, so common in the making of bronzes, makes it virtually impossible to isolate the original sources. Also, the various stages of smelting, casting and/or melting involved change

---

[14] By contrast, I have argued that it was access to iron that accounted for a major portion of the wealth of Carchemish—cf. discussion in Winter 1973: 450; 1983: 187. It should further be noted that in depictions of a tribute-bearing delegation from Patina on the throne-base of Shalmaneser III (Mallowan 1966: fig. 371a), men carry not only cauldrons and vessels of pronouncedly metal-types, but also oxhide ingots—a shape preferred for copper from the 2nd millennium on.

the chemical composition of the metal, especially with the addition of fluxes and alloys, as in bronze-making. Thus, studies which use trace element analysis to isolate presence/absence of particular elements are for our purposes unsatisfactory. This has not prevented some interesting studies on the composition of early bronzes (e.g. Stos-Gale *et al.* 1984, a study that has turned up good clusters for EB bronzes from Mersin); but what Muhly would call for is greater emphasis on metallurgical processes, as opposed to merely composition.

The one study with ramifications for our material is that of Arthur Steinberg on some of the Gordion bronzes (1981: 286–9). He, too, noted the problems inherent in ancient re-melting and re-use of bronze from various sources in a single object, as well as the uncertainty whether individual trace-elements are introduced through the copper, or are present in the tin alloy. Nevertheless, he shows some interesting correlations in the very high tin-content of cauldrons when compared with omphalos bowls thought to be of native Phrygian manufacture, found in the same tumuli. He demonstrates that the cauldrons are distinct as well from some of the Urartean bronzes he has tested from Altintepe that contain appreciable quantities of zinc (see also Hughes, Curtis and Hall 1981, on analyses of Urartean bronzes). These data certainly help in supporting the view that the cauldrons represent a coherent group, distinguishable from works known to be either Urartean or Phrygian. The evidence therefore helps to support scholarly arguments based upon style that the cauldrons are indeed North Syrian. What is needed next is to process more samples of this same period, particularly other pieces attributed to North Syrian workmanship, to see if meaningful clusters emerge.[15]

2. *Availability of Fuels*

Metallurgy makes extremely high demands on local woodlands for the supply, not only of wood, but of charcoal, needed to fuel the smelting and melting processes (cf. Horne 1982). In general, the North Syrian region was amply supplied with wood from the Amanus and the Kurd Dagh (cf. Rowton 1967). Unfortunately, present evidence does

---

[15] Along the lines already begun by the British Museum staff on bowls from the Nimrud hoard—cf. J. Curtis, this volume, and preliminary publication, Lang *et al.* 1986. Some of the new, non-destructive methods of metal analysis would be particularly important here, especially for pieces where permission to do testing has been difficult to obtain in the past (cf. Hou 1981; Glascock 1984: Tarling 1983).

not allow us to reconstruct whether some or all of the refining process
was carried out at the mining source, and thus, how much additional
processing the metal would have required in urban centres.[16] Neverthe-
less, all of the physical requisites for metal production appear present,
and we may now pass on to considerations of technology, labor and
organization.[17]

3. *Skilled Workmen and the Organization of Labor*
Primary skills involved were first, control over the technology of bronze
making, which I think we may assume by this time was considerable
(cf. Thompson 1958; Moorey and Schweizer 1972; Muhly 1973, 1976;
Charles 1980; Moorey 1985: 19–20); and second, control over the tech-
niques of casting and sheet-working that produced the finished objects
(see discussion in Moorey 1985: 34–5, and in Lowery *et al.* 1971). The
bronzes found in or attributed to North Syria attest to a high degree
of technical control. However, we lack actual excavated workshop areas
such as are preserved for late third or early second millennium sites
in Mesopotamia (Moorey 1985: 36–8), or the relatively well-preserved
metal-working quarter of the 8th century B.C. found at the Greek colony
of Ischia/Pithecussae, off the coast of Italy (Klein 1972).

Nor have we a series of moulds that could tell us how various cast
objects were produced, such as have been preserved at sites in other
regions and periods—for example, the Middle Bronze Age moulds
from Tell Mardikh in Syria, where not only the moulds, but also actual
finds that match the types in the moulds have been recovered (cf. e.g.,
Weiss 1985: no. 117).

As far as the organization of metal production is concerned, we have
virtually no information at all. Even in periods where documentation is

---

[16] In Mari, for example, two different qualities of copper are designated: *urudu kur(i)*,
'copper of the mountains', and 'washed copper'—presumably purified (Limet 1985:
201). It was in fact the Cypriote copper that arrived at Mari already "washed"—pur-
chased through Carchemish, or occasionally through Yamhad (Aleppo)—which makes
a certain amount of sense given the transport distances. Nevertheless, Limet notes
(1985: 203, citing Muhly 1973: 171–2) that even the partly purified copper would have
had to undergo a second refinement process at Mari to eliminate sulphur, carbonates
and/or oxides.
[17] In a very interesting recent study by Robert Miller, he notes that with the onset
of the Iron Age, the increasing use of iron in tools and weapons would have required
ever-greater supplies of charcoal (nd, seen in ms. p. 15), and wonders whether this
growing demand for charcoal might not have contributed to widespread deforestation,
particularly in areas around Carchemish.

relatively rich for the circulation of metals, such as the Hittite Empire
in Anatolia (cf. Archi 1984, esp. 199–203), we know little about who
supplied the raw materials to craftsmen, or how they were organized.[18]
In the Old Assyrian period, we know that control over the movement,
and hence the acquisition and presumably ownership of metals lay
in the hands of trading families, with home offices in Assur and rep-
resentatives "out in the field"; but how the metals were disbursed for
production at home is not known (see on this, discussion in Larsen
1976: 86–102). That there had to have been specialists seems evident,
given the complexity of skills required. If we may take a Neo-Assyrian
reference as information about Western Asia in general in our period,
iron-smiths were considered sufficiently characteristic of craft-specialists
to be singled out on an amulet along with chariot-carpenters, diviners
and doctors; and if Grayson and Postgate's reading of the Akkadian
term *ummânu* as "master craftsman" is correct (1983: 14), then it is likely
that there was some ranking within professions. But entirely lacking
is the kind of information available from the ethnographic record (as
recorded by Rowlands 1971), or any hints to suggest which of the several
ethnographic models might fit best in North Syria. Equally lacking is
any notion of the role metal production may have played in forming
state ideology, as can be partially reconstructed for Late Bronze Age
Cyprus (Knapp 1986).

   One of the more interesting questions would be the degree to which
the palace, that is, the state, had a monopoly, or exercised degrees of
control over metal production. We must assume that the state played
a role in the acquisition and disbursement of metals, on the basis of
Neo-Assyrian accounts of tribute paid by North Syrian rulers. Similarly,
Limet has outlined the sorts of objects, particularly in bronze that were
stockpiled in the palace of Mari in the Old Babylonian period (1985:
esp. 207–9). But when he suggests that the existence of bronze in palace
stores in lesser quantities than either silver or gold must be due either
to the difficulties in extracting sulphur from copper, or the rarity of
tin, I wonder whether, on the contrary, it is rather because bronze was
less valuable, hence more open to private venture, such that the palace

---

[18] The sort of ethno-historical information that exists for many more recent societies
(cf. Goody 1982) must remain an unattainable ideal for most archaeological situations.
But, given the lack of documentary evidence of the sort needed for the first millennium
B.C. in the Near East, and the lack of excavation in non-elite quarters, our situation
is particularly unfortunate.

was not overseeing all copper/bronze work, whereas it may have been controlling silver and gold to a far greater degree.

Another question we would want to ask, as Margueron (1979) has done for the Bronze Age, is whether palaces, even if they did not have absolute monopolies on materials, nonetheless operated exclusive palace workshops.[19]

To some extent they must have been involved, if only in the guaranteeing of weights. Metal ingots of the Late Bronze age, for example, have been shown to be remarkably consistent in weight—both copper and tin; and it is possible that the Cypro-Minoan signs on these tin ingots could be designations of standard or value, as opposed to maker's marks. Extremely important in this regard are the silver bun ingots and small blocks found at Zincirli, that were stamped L.BR. RKB/BR.PNMW, "of, (or belonging to) Bar Rakib, son of Panamuwa, a ruler contemporary with Tiglath Pileser III of Assyria (von Luschan 1943: 119–20, figs. 170–1; it is less well-known that there was also one bronze bar-ingot found at the site—von Luschan 1943: 121, fig. 172). Balmuth would see these as evidence of the first moves toward a true coinage (1967), although Bivar has argued that they do not fit his strict definition of guaranteed weight and purity (1971: 100).

We certainly do know from the bronze sphinx-weight discussed above (Bordreuil 1983) that there was an official weight system at Hamath; and the (light) Carchemish mina was sufficiently prevalent to have been adopted in the Assyrian Empire during the reign of Tiglath Pileser III (on the importance of this, see discussion in Winter 1982: 366–7). It is not clear to me how, or whether, this sheds any light on metal production, particularly of bronze, or the organization thereof. However, Archi (1985: 25) cites texts from Ebla indicating that objects of precious metal, given as marriage gifts, were all recorded according to standardised weights, indicating the importance of the weight-system in the earlier periods in Syria for regulating metal-production; while Postgate (1973: 25) has noted that until the shift to silver in the 7th century, the Assyrian economy at least was based on a copper standard, so that the North Syrian weight systems must in some way interact with metal products in the economy of the region.

---

[19] See the brief note in Weiss 1985: 243, regarding the discovery of the Mardikh two-part axe-mould found in the excavation of a quarter that included several metal workshops. It is speculated that the quarter may have been the center for *royal* artisans, due to its location on the hillside adjacent to the citadel.

   Since there is virtually no written evidence from within North Syria,
we must turn either to Assyrian documents, or to evidence from the
archaeological record, to illuminate these issues. We therefore move to
a discussion of the distribution of North Syrian bronzes in time and
space and to evidence for their valuation, in an attempt to reconstruct
the role of the bronzes both in the North Syrian economy and in the
eyes of consumers outside the region.

B. *Consumption*

1. *Distribution*
The powerful role of consumerism in modern economics has served
to move attention away from the classical Marxist almost-exclusive
concern with "production", and to focus attention on the importance
of "consumption" as a socially-mediated phenomenon (Douglas and
Isherwood 1979: esp. 4; Appadurai 1986: 31).
   Pursuit of evidence for the consumption, or usage, of the North
Syrian bronze objects under consideration here satifies the third and
final charge to Seminar participants, to investigate the "export" of local
products.[20] To this end, it seems appropriate at this point to review
the distribution in time and especially in space of our North Syrian
bronzes, for to so plot the works helps to establish not only the pattern
of their usage, but also of their value. As Appadurai has noted (1986: 5),
the trajectories of things are part of their meaning, and "it is only
through the analysis of these trajectories that we can interpret the
human transactions and calculations" that make the things come alive.
He goes on to note that from a *theoretical* point of view, it is human
actors that encode things with meaning; while from a *methodological*
point of view, it is the things-in-motion that serve to illuminate their
human, hence social, context. In other words, by tracing the patterns
of discovery of first millennium North Syrian bronzes within North
Syria, we can learn much of the uses to which pieces were put, and
their value inside their own culture; and by tracing their distribution
outside of their region of origin, we stand to learn a great deal about

---

[20] I prefer the heading "consumption" over "export", as the latter is a term too
closely associated with modern monetary equivalence.

the tastes, demands, and values of contemporary cultures, in particular how the bronzes themselves were valued.

As noted above, we are severely hampered by past archaeological strategies at North Syrian sites, which concentrated exclusively upon elite quarters. We know little of burial practices or ordinary household assemblages, which would help in determining the degree to which decorated bronzes were distributed throughout society. However, since the Tell Tainat frontlet was found within the royal residence, as were many of the Zincirli bronzes, and since clearly the state of Patina had stockpiled enough copper/bronze vessels to provide Shalmaneser III with 1000 of them, we can certainly say that they were being consumed at the highest levels of society.

Within the North Syrian region, bronzes have been found in Sam'al, Patina, Arpad and Marash, as well as Tell Halaf; while, according to Assyrian sources, Patina and Carchemish controlled large quantities of metal; and on stylistic grounds, works found elsewhere have been attributed to Carchemish and Sam'al as centers of manufacture. Thus, virtually every major North Syrian state can be linked by *some* evidence to a bronze industry.

When we move to plot objects of North Syrian style/manufacture found outside the region, we see that the distribution pattern spreads essentially east and west, leaving North Syria at the center. By far the largest sample of any single artifact class is that of the cauldron attachments. Bull and siren attachments come from Gordion and Olympia, with others from Caucasian Alishar to Praeneste variously attributed to North Syria (cf. Muscarella 1962; 1968: 12–13; Herrmann 1966: 74–8). Of the bronze bowls, certainly the Nimrud and Kerameikos bowls discussed above are North Syrian, as well as possibly the Dali bowl and one from Capena in Italy, while Muscarella (1970: 117–8, 121) would also include a bowl from the Bernardini tomb in Italy and the cauldron stands from both the Bernardini and Barberini tombs. The decorated equestrian ornaments discussed above have been found at Samos, Miletus and Eretria; with weapons and a figurine from Samos as well (although see Muscarella 1973 for cautions on some of the North Syrian attributions from Samos); and hammered sheeting from Olympia.

In general, this distribution follows closely that of North Syrian ivory carving. Whether or not one agrees with individual datum-points, the resemblances in overall pattern are clear; and the pattern is recognizably

distinct from the distribution of more-or-less contemporary works of Phoenician style (cf. Winter 1976a and 1976b).

If anything, the metal types seem to have had a slightly wider range than the ivories. As David Clarke pointed out (1968: 413, 415–6), archaeological entities from a single cultural assemblage do not always exhibit an identical distribution pattern. He suggests that the element with the widest area of distribution is likely to have been part of the earliest expansion. I would argue that it could also reflect differing values on the part of recipient cultures; however, the greater reach of North Syrian bronzes to the west may reflect greater western interest in the bulk-metal *resources* of the Levant, and hence also their metal *products* of high quality (cf. Riis 1970: 166).

In any case, the Kerameikos bowl—found in a tomb with pottery presently dated 840/830 B.C. (Smithson 1968)—does at present represent the earliest object of North Syrian manufacture found outside of the Levant. Unfortunately, that is the only closed context we have that is much use. The other Greek sites, mainly sanctuaries, have long accumulations of votive objects, often through to the Classical period (Kopcke 1963: 252, 283).

It is surely significant that no bronzes of North Syrian style (nor ivories, either) have turned up in the later Assyrian palaces of Khorsabad or Nineveh. The bowl hoard from Nimrud could conceivably range in date from the building of the Northwest Palace by Assurnasirpal through the reign of Sargon II, who not only restored the building, but noted that he used it to store campaign booty (Luckenbill 1926–7: II, S 138), and on to the fall of the Assyrian Empire at the end of the 7th century. I myself have a preference for a Sargonic date for the hoard, due to the Phrygian-style spouted vessel and omphalos bowls included therein (Layard 1853b: 181, 185), since Sargon recorded that he was the first king to receive the tribute of the Phrygian Mita of Muški (Luckenbill 1926–7: II, S 42, 71). Nevertheless, all that can provide is a *terminus ante quem* for the bowl in question.

Equally uncertain are the dates of finds within North Syria. The Tell Tainat building in which the frontlet was found was built in the 9th century, but continued in use until the 7th. Kantor seems to prefer a later 8th–7th century date for the piece (1962: 93), as Moorey does for the caryatid stands; but the frontlet's stratigraphic position is not so certain as to be sufficiently convincing, and the stands are of course without provenance. The bull-attachments from Tell Rifa'at come from a similarly broad context, that of level IIb, which spans the period

of Aramaean independence and Assyrian domination, from the 8th through the 7th century (Seton-Williams 1967: 18).

We thus have a distribution in space from Nimrud in the east, across Anatolia and Cyprus to Greece and Etruria in the west; and in time from the 3rd quarter of the 9th century to the end of the 7th, if judgments of style as well as archaeological context may be countenanced.

2. *Mechanisms of Distribution*

It is from the material record of large interaction-spheres, or "commodity eccumenes" as they have been called by Appadurai (1986: 56), that we can hope to read some of the complex social and political relations of the otherwise mute archaeological record. By refocusing attention from the product and producer to the movement of goods and their consumption, we can hope to arrive at a better understanding of the objects themselves. However, it is essential in this process, not merely to plot the distribution of the objects, as if self-propelled artifacts were wandering about the ancient world, but also to seek for explanations for their presence/absence—that is, to determine the social *mechanisms* operative behind that distribution (cf. Earle and Ericson 1977).

Explanations for distribution may vary. Objects found outside their area of origin can be understood as 1. the result of the movement of individuals, households or large numbers of people from one territory to another; 2. the accumulation of booty or tribute by a conquest state; 3. the product of gift-giving; or 4. evidence for organized commercial relations (trade) between centers.

In the present case, there is no compelling evidence that metalwork of value moved as personal property in the process of migration or repatriation. For the three mechanisms that remain, in different cases, any of several may apply. In each of the cases, booty and tribute, gifting, or trade, we may now introduce the goods as *commodities*—following the distinction that a commodity is a product made expressly to have social use-value for others, and is acquired by means of exchange.[21]

Recent literature has been useful in separating commodities from exclusive association with commoditization in modern, money-economies

---

[21] The original/statement of use and exchange value is to be found, of course, in the first chapter of Marx's *Capital* (1867: 48). But it will be seen that the use of these terms here sees them as less mutually—exclusive, such that 'commodity' is not considered to exist only in the realm of goods with exchange value (cf. Hart 1982: 45; Appadurai 1986: *passim*).

(cf. Hart 1982; Appadurai 1986). Hart, in particular, deals with commodities in 10 developmental stages, all subsequent steps including the former, but not vice-versa (1982: 40–1. He proceeds from the simplest definition, of 1. a thing produced for use, to 2. a thing produced by one individual for another; to 3. something that is the product a division of labor; to 4. a thing circulated by means of exchange; to 5. a thing exchanged through market mechanisms with determined value. At this point, his categories begin to include the use of money, which no longer pertains to the case at hand. Even at stage 5, there is considerable debate, from Polanyi's original broad description of "marketless" trade in the ancient Near East (1957) to more recent criticisms thereof (cf. Curtin 1984: 67); but certainly the silver equivalents of goods in Mesopotamia do not allow us to eliminate all notion of market from discussion.

By strict definition, booty and tribute would seem to be excluded at phase 4, as one-sided transfers that do not involve exchange. Yet, even there, it can be argued that the exchange is in the non-material realm of protection or non-agression. It is also the case that since most objects of booty or tribute have already passed through stages one to three, they have been commodities in the past, and so the entire history, or "biography" (cf. Kopytoff in Appadurai 1986: 17) of the object must be taken into consideration, not just the single "moment" of appropriation. We would therefore see booty and tribute as goods diverted from their commodity path at a particular moment in history, but still identifiable as commodities (cf. Appadurai 1986: 18).

It is in that light I feel we should see the references to metals from North Syrian states in Assyrian and Urartean booty and tribute lists. The Assyrian annals get less specific as time goes on, so that Sargon, for example, mentions merely generalized silver and gold and the "goods of the palace" as booty from Marash in 712 (Luckenbill 1926–7: II, § 29). But Assurnasirpal II records with precision copper/bronze vessels from Bit Adini (Luckenbill 1926–7: I, § 475) and from Carchemish (§ 476); Shalmaneser III, copper/bronze vessels from Patina (§ 593, 601).

As far as gift-giving is concerned, as Archi has shown for earlier North Syria, objects of metalwork were among valued marriage gifts sent by the ruler of Ebla to other cities, along with quantities of unworked metal (1985: 29). The importance of finished goods moving along the same paths as bulk raw material will be discussed further below. Given such patterns of royal gifting in early periods, it is certainly possible that some North Syrian goods in Assyrian palaces, or at Gordion, for

example, came as royal gifts at times when the states were not under coercion so much as cementing political, and even possibly commercial alliances (as illustrated, for example, in fig. 11, showing tribute to Shalmaneser III from the state of Patina/Unki). For this reason, gifting is not seen as separate from, or outside of, the commodity-system, because there may well be reciprocity involved, even if the exchange is delayed (cf. Hart 1982; 43).[22]

The various North Syrian objects found in Greek sanctuaries are generally viewed as votive gifts (Kopcke 1963). Waldbaum (1983: 10) has charted the dedication of metal objects, particularly cauldrons, by first millennium Anatolian rulers at Greek sanctuary sites—objects of not-inconsiderable value, as the Iliad tells us one tripod cauldron was valued at 12 cows. In addition, Günther Kopcke, noting how many oriental objects end up at *coastal* Greek sanctuaries, feels there must also have been a significant component of votive offerings by less-wealthy individuals, particularly the very sailors and traders who were profiting from the sea voyages in which they picked up the Near Eastern goods (pers. comm.).

That such a sea trade between the Levant and Greece existed in our period can be reconstructed from a variety of archaeological evidence and inference. As Renfrew has noted (1969: 152), while trade should not be assumed, it can often be posited, even in the absence of confirming documentary evidence, when it is the best possible explanation available for the appearance of objects in a place not of their origin. Furthermore, trade, once established in a region, seems to be one of the great constants of human activity. If historical precedents can be proved for the exercise of trade in a particular place bracketing in time the period in question—for example, the documentary evidence for commercial ventures of the second millennium B.C. which included North Syria in a large network of trade relations (Sasson 1966), plus later evidence for Syria as the center of commercial activity in the Neo-Babylonian, Persian and later Greco-Roman worlds—such precedents

---

[22] Tambiah (1984: 340) deals with gifts in terms of greasing 'the spirit of reciprocity', as prelude to material (trade) exchanges, and there is every evidence that, in the second millennium at least, a great deal of gift-giving between palaces accompanied large-scale commercial exchanges (cf. Zaccagnini 1973: 183–4). In fact, Appadurai has noted (1986: 39) that not only gifts, but also trade in luxury goods may serve as a framework for the conduct of exchange in other (often bulk) goods. We will pursue this below, in conjunction with the relationship between the distribution of our luxury goods and the bulk metals trade moving through North Syria in this period.

may be used as foundations for hypotheses that trade existed continu-
ously, provided no intervening conditions can be demonstrated to have
arrested that activity.

For the metals trade specifically, evidence from both Mari and Baby-
lon attests to the fact that copper from Cyprus was reaching Mesopota-
mia in the Old Babylonian period (Millard 1973: 211–3; Limet 1985:
202). The Mari metal was actually purchased from Carchemish and
Yamhad, the latter corresponding with the first millennium state of
Arpad, so there is even a precedent for North Syrian states involved in
the acquisition and redistribution of the prime component of bronze in
the second millennium. The vocabulary for North Syrian/Neo-Hittite
commerical transactions, and evidence for buying and selling with silver
and bronze weight-equivalents to determine value, is only now being
established (cf. Hawkins and Morpurgo-Davies 1982). Certainly the posi-
tion of Carchemish on the Euphrates makes it an ideal place for river-
transport downstream, although little is known of the relations between
North Syria and South Mesopotamia in the first millennium.

Al-Mina remains for our purposes the most important site providing
evidence of North Syrian trade, at least with Greece, for this period, just
as Ugarit supplied such evidence for the Late Bronze Age (cf. Helzer
1977: esp. 210). Located on the coast, at the mouth of the Orontes,
where the road across the Amanus issues from the east, Al-Mina was
an ideal outlet for goods from inland North Syrian sites—just as Riis
has suggested that Tell Sukas, further to the south, would have been the
most efficient outlet from Hama, and Tell Abu-Hawwam for Damascus
and Samaria (1970: 156).

Whether or not we wish to view Al-Mina as a full-fledged Greek
"colony" (see Boardman 1980), evidence for the trading nature of the
Greek presence may be interpreted from later periods at the site, in
which whole warehouses were devoted to goods awaiting trans-ship-
ment, and many workshops were engaged in the production of goods
(transformation of materials) equally for trans-shipment (Woolley 1938:
12–13).

The earliest Greek wares at Al-Mina have been dated ca. 825 B.C.
(Birmingham 1961: ca. 825; Riis 1970: anytime after 844); and Board-
man has argued for their similarity to vessels of Euboean manufacture
(1957, 1965). It will be remembered that a North Syrian horse blinker
was found at Eretria, and that the date of the Kerameikos bowl in
Athens coincides nicely with this date. In addition, sherds of early
Proto-Geometric ware have been found in North Syria itself, in 9th

century levels at Tell Tainat and Judeideh in the Amuq, and at Tell Halaf, while other geometric wares are known from Zincirli, Sakçe Gözü, and the Yunus Cemetery at Carchemish (Clairmont 1955: 97; Swift 1958).

Because there is nothing Phoenician found in Greece as early as the Kerameikos bowl, Riis has argued that the states of Syria must have been in direct contact with Greece in the 9th century (1970: 163), via the sea-routes out of Al-Mina—a thesis I have pursued elsewhere in the case of Syrian-style ivory carving (Winter 1976a).

As an alternative, particularly for the objects found at Samos and Miletus, Syrian goods could have taken an overland route across the Anatolian plateau (cf. Birmingham 1961: 185–95). This road is indicated by the various North Syrian finds at Gordion, as well as "North Syrian influence" in its local pottery (Sams 1974), and the reciprocal Phrygian finds from Tell Halaf, Carchemish and Zincirli (see Birmingham 1961, for references). This route would have seen its greatest use during the 8th century, when Mita of Muški was an important figure in the power struggles of Western Asia against the Assyrians (cf. Winter 1983).

The best explanation for the activity along the Anatolian high road, as well as for the Greek presence on the Syrian coast, is the pursuit or distribution of metals. There does not appear to be evidence that North Syria was carrying much of its own finished products. Certainly, the dispersal of goods to the Aegean seems to have been in Greek hands; and the lack of any concrete evidence for direct Ionian-Syrian contacts suggests that Gordion was probably the major relay point along the high road (cf. Winter 1973).[23]

We have discussed the access of North Syrian states to metal resources above, in connection with the raw materials necessary for production of metal goods. Since the sources for these metals were not within Syrian territory, one is hard-put NOT to posit trade as the mechanism that provided North Syria's ample supply, as had been the case with Ugarit in the 2nd millennium (cf. Heltzer 1977: 211). Similarly, we may argue for the Greeks that their most pressing need was for metal resources not available in the Aegean. Telemachus in the *Odyssey*, after all, is told

---

[23] I wonder if this could not be pursued further through literary references to Gordion in Greek sources. Walcott (1966), for example, in his discussion of Hesiod, points out that Midas' marriage to a daughter of the king of Cyme provided him access to the Aegean. The picture Hesiod draws for the late 8th/early 7th century B.C. is of interest in general, as his own father is reported to have been a sea-trader.

to cross the sea to exchange bronze for iron (*Odyssey* I: 185f.). And I believe it is no accident that the destruction of level VII at Al-Mina, at about the same time that Sennacherib destroyed Tarsus and the Assyrians were moving to limit competition for the resources of Anatolia, coincides almost exactly with the beginnings of Greek exploitation of the iron available from the Hallstatt mining complexes of Europe (Clarke 1968: 420; Drews 1976: 28–9). Cut off from their sources in the Near East, new sources had to be found.

We are at a loss to know exactly how this trade would have been organized at the North Syrian end, although it is likely that the various states acted independently, just as recent studies on Cyprus suggest a high degree of regional autonomy in the conduct of the metals trade (Åström *et al.* 1986: 41). But within each state, there are multiple possibilities for internal organization.

As noted by Kohl (1978: 468), Polanyi was certainly incorrect in insisting that market exchange never developed in Mesopotamia; while the degree to which the palace controlled all trade, or traffic in some commodities is not clear. However, that individual merchants from North Syira existed and were accorded that title is clear from a late Assyrian reference, preserved in the Harper letters from Nineveh, of the murder of a "merchant, a native of Carchemish" (Waterman 1930–36: no. 186). This seems quite a convincing indication that, at least in the 7th century, individuals from North Syrian States were established in cities outside of North Syria, and known by their profession.

Finally, the adoption of the Carchemish mina in Assyria may be understood as not unconnected to the metals trade; and the application by Sargon of the phrase, "of the king" to the Carchemish mina, or occasional specifications to it as the "mina of the merchant" on weights (Johns 1901: 264, 268–70), further attests to the commercial activities of the state, and by extension, of the region.

What is important to note, then, is first, that we must conclude on the basis of the Greek presence that North Syrian goods were being distributed as the products of trade, as well as the result of booty, tribute and gift-giving; and second, that there was an intimate connection between the bulk-metal trade and the movement of finished metal goods. The luxury objects of metal and of ivory which we have charted seem to have been by-products of the demand for raw materials; and when their presence outside of North Syria cannot be explained as tribute, booty or gift, it seems they followed along the same routes as the major commodity trade. Nor would this be the first time such a

correlation is noted historically; Appadurai has discussed the intimate association of the flow of luxury commodities with that of other, more basic commodities (1986: 40).

This brings us to our final consideration under the topic of consumption, that of the esteem, or *value*, we can reconstruct as having been associated with North Syrian metal products.

C. *Value*

Despite our lack of economic documents and cost-equivalents, it is not difficult to demonstrate the value of metals in general in our period, using circumstantial evidence like the Assyrian booty and tribute lists and the terms of their treaties with subservient states, the locations of colonies, and the distribution patterns of artifacts attesting to separate, competing spheres of influence and operation (cf. arguments in Winter 1976a; 1983).

Some of the same arguments may be used to suggest the value of finished goods in metal, particularly bronze. First, there are the tribute lists of Assurnasirpal II citing (a lot of) metal vessels from Carchemish, and of Shalmaneser III citing 1000 copper/bronze vessels from Patina. On reliefs of the two kings, both Carchemish and Patina/Unki can be identified as providing the Assyrians with large cauldrons and smaller vessels of shapes most likely to be metal (e.g. fig. 11, from the Balawat Gates of Shalmaneser III = King 1915: pl. 28; see also *ibid.*, pl. 33). In addition, the Iliad reference to the value of a cauldron as equal to 12 cows implies great value (although it would be useful to know other equivalences, such as what one cow was worth in exchange value). We can further posit the esteem in which Levantine bronzes were held, at least in 8th century Greece at the time the Homeric poems were written down, from the Odyssey reference to a Phoenician bowl presented as a gift to Telemachus. Surely this esteem is upheld by the finds in Greek sanctuaries of North Syrian bronze equestrian ornaments—although I wonder whether they were desirable *as* equestrian ornaments, or rather as plaques with divine imagery. A lingering problem remains, however, to translate "esteem" into economic "value".

I wish we had precise information regarding the terms on which our bronzes were acquired—that is, their exchange value. But I feel we can certainly demonstrate their use-value from the sorts of find-spots in which excavated pieces have been discovered; and from their use-value, reconstruct aspects of their likely exchange value as well.

In addition to the Greek sanctuary sites, North Syrian bronzes formed part of the hoard discovered in the Northwest Palace at Nimrud. Reasons for providing the hoard with a *terminus ante quem* of the end of the reign of Sargon II were given above. It should also be noted that Sargon, in recording his restoration of the palace, noted that he had used it to store a portion of the booty from the taking of Carchemish in 717 (cf. Luckenbill 1926–7: II, S 138). And there are good Near Eastern precedents for rulers storing bronze vessels and other metal objects in their palaces—for example, in Old Babylonian Mari, these objects are listed as kept in a sealed storeroom (Magness-Gardiner 1985: 54), while in Empire period Hattusa, weapons, tools and vessels are: part of the tribute-inventories, again kept under seal (Archi 1984: 200–1).

Oftentimes, these accumulations reflect sumptuary laws and exclusive access to restricted materials. But one must not forget also the "display" purposes to which such goods may be put. To the extent that they are not only valued, but *valuable*, they mark the social rank of their owners, and certify their position at the top of the social hierarchy (cf. Baudrillard 1970; Gluckman 1983; Bourdieu 1984; and discussion in Appadurai 1986: 32). In this way, luxury goods then exist in a special "register" of consumption, rather than as a special "class" of goods (cf. Appadurai 1986: 38ff.).

Withall, it must be remembered that we have been speaking of bronze in the *Iron* Age. Certainly, bronze tools and weapons will have become less common once iron was both cheap enough and strong enough to replace them. But iron would never have served for bowls, for example. Thus, there would have been a continuing need for certain classes of bronzes. In order to focus my analysis, I have in the end not answered a portion of the charge of this Seminar, that is, to pursue bronzes of the region to 539 B.C. Interesting work on the later material has been done by Moorey (1980); I have concentrated rather on that historical and cultural period contemporary with the Assyrian empire. With very few exceptions, there does not seem to have been much decorated material attributable to North Syria after the mid-7th century. Between the 9th and the mid-7th centuries B.C., the North Syrian states had been incorporated into the Assyrian Empire one by one. I would argue that luxury production decreased as the viable, independent economy of the region was subsumed into the central polity, occasioning a "migration of demands (and of craftsmen) to places where no retarding development has taken place" (Christaller 1966: 88).

Nevertheless, throughout the period of North Syrian *floruit* in the early part of the millennium, it will have been seen that bronze production played a significant role. It is possible to suggest at least that each of the major centers of North Syria had access to requisite resources for the manufacture of bronze objects, and was likely to have been engaged in independent production. That the bronzes were valued is reflected in their findspots and attested usage, from royal tombs and palaces to sanctuaries, at home and abroad. I would hope to have demonstrated as well that these goods were intimately tied in both production and distribution to larger issue of the bulk metals trade in the period.

Bibliography

Akurgal, E. 1963. *The Art of Greece: Its Origins*, New York.
Appadurai, A. 1986. 'Introduction: Commodities and the Politics of Value', in A. Appadurai (ed.), *The Social life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, Cambridge: 3–63.
Archi, A. 1984. Anatolia in the Second Millennium B.C.', in A. Archi (ed.), *Circulation of Goods in Non-Palatial Context in the Ancient Near East*, Rome: 195–206.
——. 1985. 'Circulation d'objets en métal precieux de poids standardisé à Ebla', in J.-M. Durand and J.-R. Kupper (eds.), *Miscellanea Babylonica: Mélanges Birot*, Paris: 25–34.
Åström, P. *et al.*, 1986. 'Iron Artifacts from Swedish Excavations in Cyprus', *Opuscula Atheniensia* 16: 27–41.
Balmuth, M. 1967. 'The Monetary Forerunners of Coinage in Phoenicia and Palestine', in *Trans. of the International Numismatic Committee*, Jerusalem: 25–31.
Barnett, R. D. 1935. 'The Nimrud Ivories and the Art of the Phoenicians', *Iraq* 2: 179–210.
——. 1957. *A Catalogue of the Nimrud Ivories*, London.
——. 1964. 'North Syrian and Related Harness Decorations', in K. Bittel (ed.), *Vorderasiatische Archaologie*, Berlin: 21–6.
——. 1967. 'Layard's Bronzes and their Inscriptions', *Eretz Israel* 8: 1–7.
——. 1976. *Sculptures from the North Palace of Assurbanipal at Nineveh*, London.
Baudrillard, P. 1970. *La societé de consommation*, Paris.
Birgi, S. E. 1951. 'Notes on the Influence of the Ergani Copper Mine on the Development of the Metal Industry in the Ancient Near East', *Jahrbuch für kleinasiatische Forschung* I: 337–43.
Birmingham, J. 1961. 'The Overland Route Across Anatolia in the 8th and 7th Centuries B.C.', *AS* 11: 185–95.
Bivar, A. D. H. 1971. 'A Hoard of Ingot-Currency of the Median Period from Nush-i-jan, near Malayer', *Iran* 9: 97–111.
Boardman, J. 1957. 'Early Euboean Pottery and History', *BSA* 52: 1–29.
——. 1965. 'Tarsus, Al Mina and Greek Chronology', *JHS* 85: 5–15.
——. 1980. *The Greeks Overseas*, 2nd edition, London.
Bordreuil, P. 1983. 'Bulletin d'antiquités archéologiques du Levant inédites ou méconnues', *Syria* 60: 340–1.
Botta, M. P. E. and Flandin, M. E. 1849. *Monument de Ninive* II, Paris.
Bourdieu, P. 1984. *Distinction: A social critique of the judgement of taste*, transl. R. Nice, Cambridge, MA.
Braidwood, R. J. 1937. *Mounds in the Plain of Antioch: An archaeological survey*, OIP 48, Chicago.
Bron, F. and Lemaire, A. 1983. 'Poids inscrits phénico-araméens du VIIIe siècle av. J.-C.', *Atti del 1 Congreso Internazionale di Studi Fenici e Punici*, Rome: 763–70.
Brown, J. A. 1982. 'On the Structure of Artifact Typologies', in R. Whallon and J. A. Brown (eds.), *Essays on Archaeological Typology*, Evanston: 176–90.
Buschor, E. 1959. 'Samos 1952–57', in *Neue Deutsche Ausgrabungen im Mittelmeergebiet und im Vorderen Orient*, Berlin: 197–224.
Charles, J. A. 1980. 'The coming of Copper and Copper base Alloys and Iron: a metallurgical sequence', in T. Wertime and J. D. Muhly (eds.), *The Coming of the Age of Iron*, New Haven.
Christaller, W. 1966. *Central Places in Southern Germany*, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, [originally published in Jena, 1933].
Clairmont, C. 1955. 'Greek Pottery from the Near East', *Berytus* 11: 85–137.
Clarke, D. 1968. *Analytical Archaeology*, London.

Cleuziou, S. and Berthoud, Th., 1982. 'Early Tin in the Near East: a reassessment in the light of new evidence from Western Afghanistan', *Expedition* 25: 14–19.

Crawford, H. E. W. 1974. 'The problem of tin in Mesopotamian bronzes', *World Archaeology* 6: 242–7.

Curtin, P. D. 1984. *Cross-Cultural Trade in World History*, Cambridge.

Curtis, J. E., *et al*. 1979. 'Neo-Assyrian Ironworking Technology', *PAPS* 123: 369–90.

Daux, G. 1960. 'Chronique de fouilles: Olympia', *BCH* 84: 714–21.

de Jesus, P. S. 1978. 'Metal Resources in Ancient Anatolia', *AS* 28: 97–102.

——. 1980. The Development of Prehistoric Mining and Metallurgy in Anatolia, BAR S 74, Oxford.

——. 1981. 'A survey of some ancient mines and smelting sites in Turkey', *Sonderdruck aus Archäologie und Naturwissenschaften* 2: 95ff.

Douglas, M. and Isherwood, B. 1981. *The World of Goods*, New York.

Drews, R. 1976. 'The earliest Greek settlements in the Black Sea', *JHS* 96: 18–31.

Earle, T. K. and Ericson, J. E. (eds.). 1977. *Exchange Systems in Prehistory*, New York.

Franklin, A. D., *et al*. 1978. The Search for Ancient Tin, US Government Printing Office, Washington DC.

Francis, E. D. and Vickers, M. 1985. 'Greek Geometric Pottery at Hama and its Implications for Near Eastern Chronology', *Levant* 17: 131–8.

Gale, G. H., *et al*. 'Alloy Types and Copper Sources of Anatolian Copper Alloy Arti-facts', *AS* 35: 143–74.

Giles, D. L. and Kuijpers, E. P. 1974. 'Stratiform Copper Deposit, Northern Anato-lia, Turkey. Evidence for Early Bronze I (2800 B.C.) mining activity', *Science* 186: 823–5.

Gjerstad, E. 1946. 'Decorated Metal Bowls from Cyprus', *Opuscula Archaeologica* 4: 1–13.

Glascock, M. D., *et al*. 1984. 'Analysis of cu-based metallic artifacts by PGNAA', *Archeometry* 26: 96–103.

Gluckman, M. 1983. 'Essays on Lozi land and royal property', in G. Dalton (ed.), *Research in Economic Anthropology* 5: 1–94 (originally published 1943).

Goody, E., 1982. *From Craft to Industry: The Ethnography of Proto-Industrial Cloth Production*, Cambridge.

Grayson, A. K. 1976. *Assyrian Royal Inscriptions* II, Wiesbaden.

Grayson, A. K. and Postgate, J. N. 1983. 'Two British Museum Fragments, Possibly of a Royal Decree', *Annual Review of the RIM Project* 1: 12–14.

Hart, K. 1982. 'On commoditization', in E. Goody (ed.), *From Craft to Industry*, Cam-bridge: 38–49.

Hawkins, J. D. and Morpurgo-Davies, A. 1982. 'Buying and Selling in Hieroglyphic Luwian', *Serta Indogermanica*, G. Neumann Festschrift, ed. J. Tischler, Innsbruck: 91–105.

Heltzer, M. 1977. 'The Metal Trade of Ugarit and the Problem of Transportation of Commercial Goods', *Iraq* 39: 203–11.

Herrmann, H.-V. 1966. *Die Kessel der orientalisierenden Zeit*, Olympische Forschungen 6, Berlin.

Horne, L. 1982. 'Fuel for the Metal Worker: the role of charcoal and charcoal produc-tion in ancient Metallurgy', *Expedition* 25: 6–13.

Hou, L. H. 1981. 'Analysis of an ancient Chinese Bronze Mirror by Fast Neutron Activation', *Archeometry* 23: 217–9.

Hrouda, B. 1962. *Tell Halaf IV: Die Kleinfunde aus historischer Zeit*, Berlin.

Hughes, M. J., Curtis, J. E. and Hall, E. T. 1981. 'Analyses of some Urartian Bronzes', *AS* 31: 141–5.

Jantzen, U. 1972. *Samos VIII: Ägyptische und orientalische Bronzen aus dem Heraion von Samos*, Bonn.

Johns, C. H. W. 1901. *Assyrian Deeds and Documents*, Cambridge.

Kantor, H. J. 1962. 'A Bronze Plaque with Relief Design from Tell Tainat', *JNES* 21: 93–117.

Karageorghis, V. 1973. *Excavations in the Necropolis of Salamis* III, Nicosia.

Khanzadian, Z. 1926. *Atlas de géographie économique de Syrie et du Liban*, Paris.

King, L. W. 1915. *The Bronze Reliefs from the Gates of Shalmaneser, King of Assyria*, London.

Klein, J. 1972. 'A Greek Metalworking Quarter: 8th century Excavations at Ischia', *Expedition* 14: 34–9.

Knapp, A. B. 1986. *Copper Production and Divine Protection: Archaeology, Ideology and Social Complexity on Bronze Age Cyprus*, Studies in Mediterranean Archaeology, Göteborg.

Kohl, P. L. 1978. 'The Balance of Trade in Southwestern Asia in the mid-Third Millennium B.C.', *Current Anthropology* 19: 463–92.

König, F. W. 1955–7. *Handbuch der chaldäischen Inschriften*, AfO Beiheft 8, Graz.

Kopcke, G. 1963. 'Heraion von Samos: Die Kampagnen 1961/1965 im Südtemenos', *Athenische Mitteilungen* 83: 250–314.

Kübler, K. 1954 *Kerameikos* V., Berlin.

Kunze, E. 1956. *V. Olympia Bericht*, Berlin.

Kyrieleis, H. 1966. 'Zum orientalischen Kesselschmuck', *Marburger Winckelmann Programm*: 1–25.

Lang, J. R. S., *et al.* 1986. 'Bronze Bowls with Handles from Nimrud: A Note', *Oxford Journal of Archaeology* 5: 109–17.

Larsen, M. T. 1976. *The Old Assyrian City-State and its Colonies*, Copenhagen.

Layard, A. H. 1849. *Monuments of Nineveh*, London.

——. 1853. *A Second Series of the Monuments of Nineveh*, London.

Limet, H. 1985. 'La technique du bronze dans les archives de Mari', in J.-M. Durand & J.-R. Kupper (eds.) *Miscellanea Babylonica: Mélanges Birot*, Paris: 201–210.

Lowery, P. R., *et al.* 1971. 'Scriber, Graver, Scorer, Tracer: notes on experiments in bronzeworking technique', *Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society* 37:167ff.

Luckenbill, D. D. 1926–7. *Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia*, 2 vols., Chicago.

von Luschan, F. 1911. *Ausgrabungen in Sendschirli* 4, Berlin.

——. 1943. *Ausgrabungen in Sendschirli* 5, Berlin.

Maddin, R., *et al.* 1977. 'How the Iron Age Began', *Science* 237: 122–31.

Magness-Gardiner, B. 1985. 'The Function of Seals in 2nd Millennium B.C. Syria: An examination of the archaeological and textual sources', unpublished paper.

Mallowan, M. E. L. 1966. *Nimrud and its Remains*, 2 vols., London.

Margueron, J.-C. 1979. 'Existe-t-il des ateliers dans les palais orientaux de l'âge du Bronze?', *Klema* 4: 1ff.

Matthers, J. (ed.). 1981. *The River Qoueiq, Northern Syria and its Catchment. Studies arising from the Tell Rifa'at Survey 1977–1979*, BAR S 98, Oxford.

Maxwell-Hyslop, R. 1974. 'Assyrian Sources of Iron', *Iraq* 36: 139–154.

Mazar, B., *et al.* 1964. 'Ein Gev: Excavation in 1961', *IEJ* 14: 1–49.

Millard, A. R. 1973. 'Cypriot Copper in Babylonia, c. 1745 B.C.', *JCS* 25: 211–3.

Moorey, P. R. S. 1971. 'A Bronze Statuette of a Bull', *Levant* 3: 90–91.

——. 1973. 'Some Syro-Phoenician Bronze Caryatid Stands', *Levant* 5: 83–90.

——. 1980. *Cemeteries of the First Millennium B.C. at Deve Hüyük*, BAR S 87, Oxford.

——. 1985. *Materials and Manufacture in Ancient Mesopotamia: The evidence of Archaeology and Art. Metals and metalwork, glazed materials and glass*, BAR S 237, Oxford.

Moorey, P. R. S. and Schweizer, F. 1972. 'Copper and Copper Alloys in Ancient Iraq, Syria and Palestine: some new analyses', *Archaeometry* 14: 177–98.

Muhly, J. D. 1973. *Copper and Tin*, Hamden, Connecticut.

——. 1976. *Supplement to Copper and Tin*, Hamden, Connecticut.

Muhly, J. D. and Wertime, T. A. 1973. 'Evidence for the sources and use of tin during the Bronze Age of the Near East: a reply to J. E. Dayton', *World Archaeology* 5: 111–22.

Muhly, J. D., Maddin, R., Stech, T. and Özgen, E. 1985. 'Iron in Anatolia and the Nature of the Hittite Iron Industry', *AS* 35: 67–84.

Muscarella, O. W. 1962. 'The Oriental Origin of the Siren Cauldron Attachments', *Hesperia* 31: 317–29.

——. 1967. 'Fibulae represented on Sculpture', *JNES* 26: 82–6.

——. 1968. 'Winged Bull Cauldron Attachments from Iran', *MMJ* 1: 7–18.

——. 1970. 'Near Eastern Bronzes in the West: The Question of Origin', in S. Doehringer *et al.* (eds.), *Art and Technology*, Cambridge, Mass: 109–28.

——. 1973. Review of U. Jantzen, *Samos VIII* in *AJA* 77: 236–7.

von Oppenheim, M. 1931. *Der Tell Halaf*, Leipzig.

Orthmann, W. 1971. *Untersuchungen zur späthethitischen Kunst*, Bonn.

Piotrovsky, B. 1969. *Urartu: An Archaeological Adventure*, New York.

Pleiner, R. and Bjorkman, J. K. 1974. 'The Assyrian Iron Age: the history of iron in the Assyrian civilization', *PAPS* 118: 283–313.

Polanyi, K. 1957. 'Marketless Trading in Hammurabi's Time', in K. Polanyi (ed.), *Trade and Market in the Early Empires*, Glencoe, Ill.: 12–27.

Postgate, J. N. 1973. *The Governor's Palace Archive*, CTN 2, London.

Poulsen, F. 1912. *Der Orient und die frühgriechische Kunst*, Leipzig.

Puglisi, S. M. and Palmieri, A. 1968. 'Researches in the Malatya District (1965–66)', *Türk Arkeoloji Dergisi* 15: 81–101.

Read, D. W. 1982. 'Toward a Theory of Archaeological Classification', in R. Whallon and J. A. Brown (eds.), *Essays on Archaeological Typology*, Evanston: 56–92.

Renfrew, C. 1969. 'Trade and culture process in European prehistory', *Current Anthropology* 10: 151–69.

——. 1986. 'Varna and the emergence of wealth in prehistoric Europe', in A. Appadurai (ed.), *The Social Life of Things*, Cambridges 141–68.

Riis, P. J. 1970. *Sukas* I, Copenhagen.

Röllig, W. and Muhly, J. D. 1983. 'Kupfer', *RLA* 6: 345–64.

Rowlands, M. 1971. 'The archaeological interpretation of Prehistoric Metalworking', *World Archaeology* 3: 210–24.

Rowton, M. B. 1967. 'The Woodlands of Ancient Western Asia', *JNES* 26: 261–77.

Ryzanov, V. 1979. 'On general ancient tin ore sources in the territory of Uzbekistan' (in Russian), *Material for the History of Uzbekistan* 15: 98ff.

Sams, K. 1974. 'Phrygian Painted Animals in Anatolian Orientalizing Art', *AS* 24: 169–96.

Sasson, J. 1966. 'A sketch of North Syrian economic relations in the Bronze Age', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 9: 161–81.

Seton-Williams, M. V. 1954. 'Cilician Survey', *AS* 4: 121–74.

——. 1961. 'Preliminary Report on the Excavations of Tell Rifa'at', *Iraq* 23: 68–87.

——. 1967. 'The Excavations at Tell Rifa'at, 1964: Second preliminary report', *Iraq* 29: 16–33.

Simthson, E. L. 1968. 'The Tomb of a Rich Athenian Lady', *Hesperia* 37: 77–116.

Stchepinsky, V. 1944. 'Géologie et resources minerales de la région de Malatya (Turquie)', *Maden Tetkik ve Arama* 9: 93–104.

Steinberg, A. 1981. 'Analyses of selected Gordion Bronzes', in R. S. Young, *Three Great Early Tumuli*, Philadelphia: 287–9.

Stos-Gale, Z. A., *et al.* 1984. 'Early Bronze Age Trojan Metal Sources and Anatolians in the Cyclades', *Oxford Journal of Archaeology* 3: 23–37.

Swift, G. F., Jr. 1958. *The Pottery of Amuq Phases K to O, and its Historical Relationships*, unpublished PhD Dissertation, University of Chicago.

Tambiah, S. J. 1984. *The Buddhist saints of the forest and the cult of amulets*, Cambridge.

Tarling, D. H. 1983. 'The possible utilisation of the Magnetization of Archaeological Metallic Artifacts', *Journal of Archaeological Science* 10: 41–2.

Thompson, F. C. 1958. 'The Early Metallurgy of Copper and Bronze', *Man* 58: 1ff.

Toll, I. M. 1921. 'The Mineral Resources of Syria', *Engineering and Mining Journal* 112, no. 22: 845–52.

United States Operations, Mission to Turkey. 1960. *A Guide to the Known Minerals of Turkey*, Mineral Research and Explorations Institute, rev. ed. by A. W. Ryan, Ankara.

Walcot, P. 1966. *Hesiod and the Near East*, Cardiff.

Waldbaum, J. 1983. *Metalworkinq from Sardis: The Finds through 1974*, Cambridge, MA.

Wartke, R.-B. 1985. 'Die Berliner Kesselattasche VA 2988', *Altorientalische Forschungen* 12: 87–100.

Waterman, L. 1930–36. *Royal Correspondence of the Assyrian Empire*, 4 Vols. Ann Arbor.

Weiss, H. (ed.) 1985. *Ebla to Damascus: Art and Archaeology of Ancient Syria*, Washington, DC.

Wheeler, T. S. and Maddin, R. 1980. 'Metallurgy and ancient man', in T. Wertime and J. D. Muhly (eds.), *The Coming of the Age of Iron*, New Haven: 99–126.

Winter I. J. 1973. *North Syria in the early first millennium B.C. with special reference to Ivory carving*, PhD dissertation, Columbia University.

——. 1976a. 'Phoenician and North Syrian Ivory Carving in Historical Context: Questions of Style and Distribution', *Iraq* 38: 1–26.

——. 1976b. 'Carved Ivory Furniture Panels from Nimrud: A Coherent Sub-group of the North Syrian Style', *MMJ* 11: 25–54.

——. 1977. 'Perspective on the 'Local Style' of Hasanlu IVB: A study receptivity', in L. D. Levine and T. C. Young, Jr. (eds.) *Mountains and Lowlands*, Bibliotheca Mesopotamia 7, Malibu: 371–86.

——. 1981. 'Is there a South Syrian Style of Ivory Carving in the Early First Millennium B.C.?', *Iraq* 43: 101–30.

——. 1982. 'Art as Evidence for Interaction: Relations between the Assyrian Empire and North Syria', in H.-J. Nissen and J. Renger (eds.) *Mesopotamien und seine Nachbarn*, Berlin: 355–82.

——. 1983. 'Carchemish *ša kišad purātti*', *AS* 33: 177–97.

Woolley, C. L. 1938. 'Excavations at al-Mina, Suedia, I and II', *JHS* 58: 1–30 and 133–70, resp.

Yakar, J. 1985. 'Regional and Local Schools of Metalwork in Early Bronze Age Anatolia II', *AS* 35: 25–38.

Young, R. S. 1962. 'The 1961 Campaign at Gordion', *AJA* 66: 153–68.

——. 1967. 'A bronze bowl in Philadelphia', *JNES* 26: 145–54.

——. 1981. *Three Great Early Tumuli*, Philadelphia.

Zaccagnini, C. 1973. *Lo scambio dei doni nel vicino oriente durante i secolo XV–XIII*, Rome.

Figure 1, a & b. Sculpted horse's head, Zincirli [Berlin, Staatliche Museen].

Figure 2, a & b. Bronze equestrian frontlet, Tell Tainat
[Chicago, The Oriental Institute].

Figure 3. Nude goddess, Herald's Wall, Carchemish
[Ankara, National Museum].

Figure 4. Bronze equestrian blinker, said to be from Eretria.

Figure 5. Detail, relief of Assyrian horses, Throneroom B, Northwest
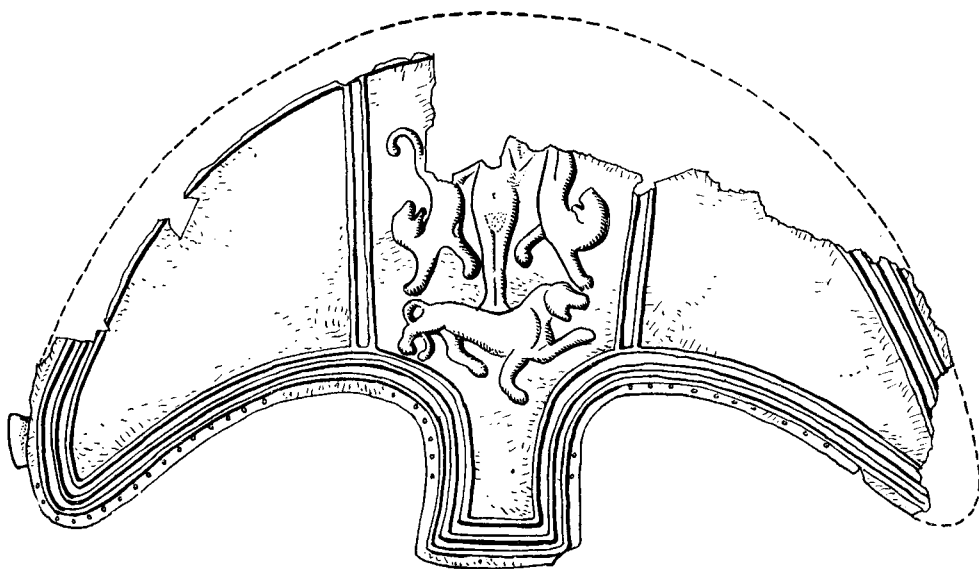Palace of Assurnasirpal II, Nimrud [London, The British Museum].

Figure 6. Bronze chariot pole ornament, Zincirli, drawing.

Figure 7. Detail, relief of Assyrian chariot horses, North Palace of
Assurnasirpal, Nineveh [London, The British Museum].

Figure 8. Bronze cauldron, Tumulus MM, Gordion
[Ankara, National Museum].

Figure 9, a & b. Bronze siren cauldron attachment, Olympia: rear and frontal views
[Berlin, Staatliche Museen].

Figure 10. Bronze bowl in North Syrian style, Northwest Palace, Nimrud
[London, The British Museum].

Figure 11. Detail, bronze band of Shalmaneser III gate, Balawat
[London, The British Museum].

CHAPTER NINE

NORTH SYRIAN IVORIES AND TELL HALAF RELIEFS:
THE IMPACT OF LUXURY GOODS UPON "MAJOR" ARTS

There are striking similarities in overall style, detail, and subject matter between certain of the early first millennium ivory carvings attributed to North Syrian manufacture and the reliefs from Tell Halaf (ancient Guzana), a site located in the Ḫabur River basin. Ivories of North Syrian type have actually been found in fragments at Tell Halaf itself, as well as at various other sites: Nimrud, Hama, Zincirli, and Hasanlu, to name the most well known. These parallels led Helene Kantor to argue in 1956 that in fact the ivories, and possibly other minor arts, must have served as the models for the stone reliefs of what was essentially a provincial and culturally backward local center.[1] Such a scenario reverses the usual direction of influence from one medium to another—a direction generally understood as moving from the so-called major arts to so-called minor arts, with scale often determining what is considered "major."[2] Nevertheless, I believe a number of factors can be adduced in support of the original hypothesis, and I should like to offer these brief notes as a tribute to the extraordinarily sensitive visual observations and historical perceptions of Helene Kantor, whose work on many aspects of the art of the early first millennium B.C. laid the foundations for much of my own.

---

* This article originally appeared as "North Syrian Ivories and Tell Halaf Reliefs: The Impact of Luxury Goods upon 'Major' Arts," in *Essays in Ancient Civilization Presented by Helene J. Kantor*, A. Leonard, Jr. and B.B. Williams, eds., Chicago: Oriental Institute, 1989, pp. 321–332.

[1] H. J. Kantor, "Syro-Palestinian Ivories," *JNES* 15 (1956): 173, following a suggestion made by P. J. Riis, *Hama. Fouilles et recherches de la Fondation Carlsberg 1931–1938. II, 3: Les Cimitières á cremation* (Copenhagen, 1948), pp. 198f.

[2] See, for example, the study of M.-Th. Barrelet, "Etude de glyptique akkadienne," *Orientalia* 39 (1970): 213–51, in which she suggests that seal engravers of palace and temple workshops would have had direct access to the major monuments of the times, and that specifically cult statuary and reliefs provided the stimulus for certain imagery on Akkadian seals (cf. p. 217).

Tell Halaf was intermittently excavated under the direction of the Baron Max von Oppenheim from 1899 to 1929.[3] In a royal Aramaean inscription of the tenth to ninth centuries B.C., the site was referred to as the kingdom of Paliē;[4] however Assyrian texts make reference to Guzana (bibl. Gozan), capital of Bit Bahiani, which eventually was incorporated into the empire as the province of Guzana, extending from Ras al Ain to Nisibis on the modern Turkish-Syrian border.

In terms of archaeological assemblages, both Tell Halaf and the neighboring site of Tell Fakhariyeh, excavated briefly by McEwan for the Oriental Institute in 1940,[5] show the same pattern as a number of other North Syrian sites in the early first millennium B.C.: a pre-Assyrian phase with definite affinities with the west, and then a subsequent eighth to seventh centuries phase with ties to Assyria.[6]

The picture is complicated somewhat by the complex history of the region during the second millennium, during which time a strong Middle Assyrian presence had been pushed back by the arrival and settlement of the Aramaeans in the late eleventh–early tenth centuries.[7] Sometime in the reign of Adad Nirari II of Assyria (911–891 B.C.), however, Assyrian power had been re-established up to the Ḫabur, and with the western campaigns of Tukulti Ninurta II (890–884), an Assyrian presence was felt between the Ḫabur and the Euphrates—thus preparing the way for the move of his son, Assurnasirpal II (883–859) into Syria beyond the great river.

The region of Guzana/Bit Bahiani is mentioned in Neo-Assyrian texts of 894 (Adad-Nirari II), 882 and 867 B.C., prior to the specific

---

[3] Cf. synopsis in B. Hrouda, "Halaf, Tell," *RlA* 4 (Berlin, 1972–75), p. 54; also M. von Oppenheim, *Tell Halaf, eine neue Kultur im ältesten Mesopotamien* (Leipzig, 1931), a popular, narrative account of the excavations and the history of the site, and the official excavation reports, *Tell Halaf, vols. I–IV* (Berlin, 1943–1962). Actual campaign seasons were 1899, 1911–1913, and 1927–1929.

[4] Cf. R. O'Callaghan, *Aram Nahrain*, Analecta Orientalia 26 (Rome, 1948), p. 130.

[5] C. W. McEwan et al., *Soundings at Tell Fakhariyeh*, OIP 79 (Chicago, 1956).

[6] One could only wish that the Tell Halaf material had been recorded with as much care as that from Tell Fakhariyeh; (cf. review of B. Hrouda, *Tell Halaf IV*, by J. V. Canby in *AJA* 68 (1964): 71–72. Nevertheless, Helene Kantor, in writing on the Fakhariyeh pottery, states that the orientation of the Ḫabur area is clearly toward the west in the early part of the first millennium B.C. She notes that the Iron Age pottery at both sites is virtually identical to that from the Amuq plain, and similar to some Palestinian Iron Age pottery as well (H. J. Kantor, "The Pottery," in McEwan et al., *Soundings*, pp. 25–29).

[7] See F. Dupont-Sommer, *Les Araméens* (Paris, 1949), p. 21; W. F. Albright, "The Date of the Kapara Period at Gozan (Tell Halaf)," *AnSt* 6 (1956): 75–85; O'Callaghan, *Aram Nahrain*, pp. 103–4.

campaign of Adad-Nirari III in 808 B.C., where the region is designated as a province in that year's eponym list.[8] What is not certain is whether indeed Guzana had been incorporated into the Assyrian empire earlier and Adad-Nirari III was simply putting down a revolt, or whether provincial status was new at that time.[9]

It is within this historical context that the debates concerning the dating of the carving of the Tell Halaf reliefs and their inscription by a local ruler, Kapara, have been situated. Good summaries of the arguments are contained in the most recent studies of North Syrian and southeastern Anatolian reliefs by Orthmann and Genge,[10] which take as their point of departure the publication of the reliefs by Opitz and Moortgat in 1955.[11]

The stone carvings from Tell Halaf consist of a series of small orthostat slabs (average height ca. 0.60 m), a series of large orthostats (ht. ca. 1.5 m), and several sculptures in the round. A number of the slabs bear an inscription in Akkadian, identifying the palace of one "Kapara, son of Hadiani," with which building they were associated (e.g., figs. 5 and 13). Initially, von Oppenheim wished to date the entire group of works to the twelfth century B.C.;[12] however, it soon became clear that the work could not support this early date. Since that time, some scholars (for example, Albright and O'Callaghan) have argued for a date in the tenth century, on the basis of the "early" aspects of the cuneiform script used on the reliefs; while others (for example, Akurgal and Spycket) have called for a date after the establishment of Assyrian control in 808 B.C.—i.e., in the eighth century.[13] In general, each of

[8] See citations in K. Grayson, *Assyrian Royal Inscriptions, Pt. 2* (Wiesbaden, 1976), paragraphs 433, 553, 584; discussion in Unger, *RlA II*, 428 and review of historical issues as relevant to the reliefs in W. Orthmann, *Untersuchungen zur späthethitischen Kunst* (Bonn, 1971), pp. 178–82.

[9] See discussion in S. A. Kaufman, "Reflections on the Assyrian-Aramaic Bilingual from Tell Fakhariyeh," *Maarav* 3/2 (1982): 140–42.

[10] Orthmann, *Untersuchungen*, pp. 119–29; H. Genge, *Nordsyrisch-sudanatolische Reliefs: Eine archäologisch-historische Untersuchung Datierung und Bestimmung* (Copenhagen, 1979), pp. 125–42.

[11] D. Opitz and A. Moortgat, *Tell Halaf, vol. III: Die Bildwerke* (Berlin, 1955), which was reviewed by Kantor, *JNES* 15 (1956); and see also summaries in Hrouda, *RlA* IV, p. 54 and J. V. Canby, "Guzana (Tell Halaf)," in H. Weiss, ed., *Ebla to Damascus: Art and Archaeology of Ancient Syria* (Washington, D.C., 1985), pp. 332–38.

[12] M. von Oppenheim, *Tell Halaf, eine neue Kultur*, p. 266.

[13] E.g., Albright, *AnSt* 6, p. 85; O'Callaghan, *Aram Nahrain*, pp. 114f.; E. Akurgal, *The Art of Greece: Its Origins* (New York, 1968), pp. 114–19; A. Spycket, *La Statuaire du proche orient ancien* (Leiden-Cologne, 1981), pp. 414–15.

these positions is based upon consideration of either the inscriptional
evidence or selected stylistic factors. None of them can be sustained,
however, when the total picture of the stylistic, epigraphic, archaeologi-
cal, and historical factors are taken together.

Moortgat, in his 1955 publication of the reliefs, opted for a date in
the late ninth century;[14] although an essential part of his argument
was the necessity of exposure to "Assyrian influence" in certain aspects
of the reliefs—a view now understood to be an over-simplification in
the dynamic of Assyria's relations with the West, since in fact Assyria
often borrowed from North Syria in that period.[15] Nevertheless,
Moortgat may well have been correct on other grounds. In the later
publication of the small finds from Tell Halaf, Hrouda also argued
for a ninth century date, based in parallels in the ceramic and other
artifactual assemblage.[16] More recently, Orthmann seems to prefer a
ninth century date on stylistic grounds, although he has left the ques-
tion of a tenth century date open, and assigns the Tell Halaf reliefs to
his Sph. II period, 950–850 B.C.;[17] while Genge convincingly marshals
evidence for a date in the first half of the ninth century, and uses both
parallels with works from other North Syrian sites and links to early
Assyrian works.[18]

The arguments are complicated by indications that the orthostats
are to be divided into two groups: the larger ones are later; the smaller
ones, although stylistically very similar, are both cruder in execution
and earlier.[19] The smaller orthostats may not have been found in their
original position, as Naumann noted that they were all arranged in a
careless fashion in the palace, and had apparently been reused in a
secondary context.[20] Although a number were inscribed by Kapara,
some of them actually bear vestiges of an original inscription associating

---

[14] *Tell Halaf III*, p. 31: ca. 830–810 B.C.
[15] Cf. I. J. Winter, "Art as Evidence for Interaction: Relations between the Assyrian
Empire and North Syria," in H.-J. Nissen and J. Renger, eds., *Mesopotamien und seine
Nachbarn* (Berlin, 1982), pp. 355–82, esp. 369–70.
[16] B. Hrouda, *Tell Halaf, vol. IV: Die Kleinfunde aus historischer Zeit* (Berlin, 1962), pp. 8
and 76ff.; see discussion in the review by Canby, *AJA* 68, p. 72.
[17] Orthmann, *Untersuchungen*, p. 160.
[18] Genge, *Nordsyrisch-sudanatolische Reliefs*, p. 130.
[19] Cf. Moortgat, *Tell Halaf III*, p. 15ff.; and followed by Orthmann, *Untersuchungen*,
pp. 119–23.
[20] F. Langenegger, K. Muller, and R. Naumann, *Tell Halaf II: Die Bauwerke* (Berlin,
1950), pp. 15ff.

the carvings with a "Temple of the Weather God" (figs. 3 and 9).[21] Nevertheless, the two sub-groups clearly form a single stylistic unit. Moortgat himself states that there is no essential difference in style, just in execution, between the "pre-Kapara" reliefs and those of Kapara, and Mellink points out the specific details which "tend to reduce the chronological range of the early and late groups."[22] Thus, Genge, too, would see the older reliefs dated shortly before or ca. 880 B.C. and the later ones dated ca. 860 B.C.[23]

In support of this dating, Genge lists what he has called the "symptoms," the individual elements that establish parallels between the Tell Halaf reliefs on the one hand, and the reliefs of Katuwas of Carchemish (ca. 900–880 B.C.) and Assurnasirpal II of Assyria on the other;[24] and his list echoes very closely that put forth in my own study of 1973, which formed the background for a study of the North Syrian ivories.[25] The particular mixture of Neo-Assyrian and North Syrian elements, superimposed upon a local tradition surviving from the second millennium, as well as a close relationship between the reliefs and small finds from the site, present an overall picture that would be most consistent with a date in the first millennium when the Ḫabur had already been exposed to a Neo-Assyrian presence (i.e., after the campaigns of Adad-Nirari II), but before Shalmaneser III conquered Bit Adini in 855 B.C., which cut Tell Halaf off from Carchemish and the further West—in other words, some time in the first half of the ninth century.

It is indeed unfortunate that stratigraphic control of the excavations was not sufficient for the pottery to provide an independent date for either the Kapara or pre-Kapara levels;[26] and it is not impossible that the reign of Kapara might have occurred slightly after the mid-century, given the secondary nature of his inscriptions and the reuse of slabs. However, the stylistic and iconographic analysis should firmly place his rule within the ninth century.

This dating is now strongly supported by the discovery of an important basalt statue of a first millennium ruler of Guzana at the site of

---

[21] Cf. M. J. Mellink, "Review of Opitz and Moortgat, *Tell Halaf III*," in *AJA* 62 (1958): 438.

[22] Moortgat, *Tell Halaf III*, p. 24; Mellink, *AJA* 62, p. 439.

[23] Genge, *Nordsyrisch-südanatolische Reliefs*, p. 130.

[24] Genge, *Nordsyrisch-südanatolische Reliefs*, pp. 128–29.

[25] I. J. Winter, "North Syria in the early first millennium B.C., with special reference to Ivory Carving" (Ph. D. dissertation, Columbia University, New York, 1973), pp. 164ff.

[26] On this, see Canby, *AJA* 68, pp. 71–72.

Tell Fakhariyeh, just 4 km to the northeast of Tell Halaf. The statue
is that of a free-standing, bearded male, wearing a long, wrapped gar-
ment of Assyrian type, his hands clasped at the waist. A bilingual text
in Aramaic and Neo-Assyrian cuneiform covers the skirt: Assyrian on
the front, Aramaic on the back.

Studies to date concentrate upon the inscription, particularly as
it is at present the earliest known Aramaic text.[27] Dating on purely
paleographic grounds could fall anywhere from the early tenth through
the middle of the eighth century,[28] but the cluster of evidence in both
texts—based upon arguments of orthography, morphology, phonology,
syntax, and vocabulary, as well as upon an assessment of the likely
historical context for the content—yields a date around the middle, or
in the third quarter of the ninth century.[29]

This is important for the dating of the Tell Halaf reliefs for several
reasons. The editors enumerate several stylistic and iconographic paral-
lels for the statue amongst Assyrian works of the ninth century, particu-
larly those of Assurnasirpal II, and cite details such as coiffure, dress,
and sandals.[30] In fact, I believe one could go even further, and argue that
while the squat proportions, enlarged eyes, and abbreviated rendering
of beard- and hair-curls betray the hand of a local stone-carver, while
the conscious adoption of Assyrian court dress, shoes, clasped hands,
and overall stance suggest a historical period in which Assyria was set-
ting the standard, and providing the models, for major public works
of Guzana. In particular, those models seem to be the free-standing
royal statues preserved from the reigns of both Assurnasirpal II and

---

[27] The editio princeps is that by A. Abou-Assaf, P. Bordreuil, and A. R. Millard, *La
Statue de Tell Fekherye et son inscription bilingue assyro-araméenne* (Paris, 1982), but see also
S. Kaufman, *Maarav* 3/2 (1982): 137–75; R. Zadok, "Remarks on the Inscription of
HDYS'Y from Tall Fakhariya," *Tel Aviv* 9/2 (1982): 117–29; J. Naveh, "The Date of the
Tell Fakheriye Inscription," *Shnaton* V–VI (1982–83): 131–41 (in Hebrew); J. Greenfield
and A. Shaffer, "Notes on the Akkadian-Aramean Bilingual Statue from Tell Fekheriye,"
Iraq 45 (1983): 109–16; D. Pardee and R. D. Biggs, "Review of Abou-Assaf et al., *La
Statue*," in *JNES* 43 (1984): 253–57; and J. Greenfield and A. Shaffer, "Notes on the
Curse Formulae of the Tell Fekherye Inscription," *Revue Biblique* 92 (1985): 47–59.

[28] See Abou-Assaf et al., *La Statue*, p. 97. J. Naveh (*Shnaton* V–VI, pp. 131–41) would
even argue for the twelfth century.

[29] Abou-Assaf et al., *La Statue*, pp. 87–102, 105–9, and 112; accepted by Zadok,
Tel Aviv 9, Pardee and Biggs, *JNES* 43, and Greenfield and Shaffer, *Revue Biblique* 92;
and supported with additional evidence by Kaufman, *Maarav* 3, pp. 140–41. Such a
date is also argued by Millard, "Assyrians and Arameans," *Iraq* 45 (1983): 104–5, on
the basis of parallels between the Akkadian text and known texts of Assurnasirpal II
of Assyria.

[30] Abou-Assaf et al., *La Statue*, pp. 9–13.

his son, Shalmaneser III.[31] As has been discussed with regard to the Assyrian dress and coiffure affected by Kilamuwa of Samʾal also in the mid-ninth century B.C., one would need to posit a phase of conscious emulation of, if not political association with, Assyria.[32]

The stylistic evidence dovetails quite nicely with the picture preserved in the two texts on the statue. The Aramaic text refers to its subject as HDYSʿY, MLK GWZN, "*King* of Guzana"; but in the Assyrian text, he is referred to as Had-Itʿi, *šakin* ᵘʳᵘ*Gu-za-ni*, "*Governor* of (the city of) Guzana."[33] It is argued that such a discrepency in titles could only pertain to a historical period in which the ruler would claim the highest possible status in his own language, but in fact had already become subject to Assyria with the status of provincial governor, not king. If it were certain just when Guzana was first incorporated into the Assyrian empire, one could then provide the statue with a specific terminus post quem; however, as noted above, there are serious questions about when between 894 and 808 B.C. that shift may have occurred.

Nevertheless, the sharp stylistic contrast between the Tell Fakhariyeh statue and the sculptures of Tell Halaf helps to situate the latter at a time *prior to*, rather than after, Assyrian domination.

The points of contact between the Tell Halaf reliefs and Assyrian art have been enumerated by Orthmann and by Genge,[34] and they are many. Withall, the dominant aesthetic is overwhelmingly Neo-Hittite—in overall style, in details, such as dress, in content, and probably in placement and alternation of basalt and limestone as well.[35] Closest of all are the reliefs of Carchemish, the major power to the

---

[31] E.g., one of Assurnasirpal II from Nimrud (Spycket, *La Statuaire*, fig. 234; and two of Shalmaneser III from Nimrud (ibid., figs. 235a–b and 236)—especially the latter, with clasped hands. When compared with a slightly later statue of a divine attendant, from the time of Adad Nirari III (ibid., fig. 231), the stylistic parallels—particularly to proportion, hands, and the way in which the hair sits on the shoulders—are considerably closer to ninth century examples than to the eighth century figure.

[32] For Kilamua, see Orthmann, *Untersuchungen*, pl. 66b, and discussion in Winter, *Mesopotamien und seine Nachbarn*, p. 365. For the Tell Fakhariyeh statue, it is part of the picture that the Assyrian text takes pride of place on the front of the statue, and was apparently executed first, the Aramean text then set on the back and spilling over onto the hem and front (cf. comments in Greenfield and Shaffer, *Iraq* 45, p. 109). This would further suggest that the statue was done after Assyrian domination.

[33] Cf. Abou-Assaf et al., *La Statue*, p. 23, l. 6 and p. 15, l. 8; also Kaufman, *Maarav* 3/2, p. 159.

[34] *Untersuchungen*, pp. 149ff.: *Nordsyrisch-sudanatolische Reliefs*, p. 129; and see also Winter, *North Syria*, pp. 164–65.

[35] Cf. Genge, *Nordsyrisch-sudanatolische Reliefs*, p. 138; Winter, *North Syria*, pp. 163–65; and Mellink, *AJA* 62, p. 439.

west of Guzana, on the Euphrates. The dominant role of Carchemish in providing both craftsmen and artistic influence to surrounding states in the ninth century is laid out in detail elsewhere;[36] and the reliefs of Tell Halaf should be dated within the period of this floruit.

The use of cuneiform in Kapara's inscription rather than Aramaic can certainly be accounted for, first, by the relative newness of the Aramaean settlements and, second, by the long history of exposure to Assyrians and the Assyrian language in the region preceding Aramaean settlement.[37]

The style and iconography of the Kapara and pre-Kapara sculptures argue strongly for a date prior to both the Tell Fakhariyeh statue and incorporation as an Assyrian province. This fits well also with Kaufman's analysis of the ductus of the Kapara inscriptions as unquestionably earlier than that of the Tell Fakhariyeh text.[38] Thus, the Tell Fakhariyeh statue, with its argued date in the third quarter of the ninth century, helps to establish the relative date of the Tell Halaf reliefs as earlier. With the identification of the father of HDYSʿY, SSNWRY, with Šamaš-Nuri, also a governor of Guzana under the Assyrians, and an eponym for 866 B.C.,[39] Kapara would have to have preceded both, and Genge's date in the first half of the ninth century for the Tell Halaf sculpture, or even Orthmann's open door into the late tenth century, holds well.

All of the preceding sets the stage for a discussion of the relationship between the Tell Halaf reliefs and ivory carvings of North Syrian style.

---

[36] Winter, "Carchemish *ša kišad puratti*," *AnSt* 33 (1983): 177–97.

[37] In other words, the very cursory cuneiform inscriptions scratched onto the reliefs of Tell Halaf are a quite different phenomenon from the highly sophisticated and more carefully executed text on the Tell Fakhariyeh statue, and may well reflect superficial second millennium, or early first millennium, exposure to the language, not current cultural immersion. By the same token, there are also a number of traces of second millennium art in the reliefs, as discussed by Genge, *Nordsyrisch-sudanatolische Reliefs*, pp. 139–40.

[38] Kaufman, *Maarav* 3/2, p. 140.

[39] Cf. Abou-Assaf et al., *La Statue*, p. 103; Kaufman, *Maarav* 3/2, p. 141; and Millard, *Iraq* 45, pp. 104–5. The passage in which Šamaš-nuri is mentioned (Grayson, *Assyrian Royal Inscriptions* 2, paragraph 587) is one in which Assurnasirpal II records that in the eponym of Š-n, he campaigned up the Euphrates and received tribute from Kummuḫ— a state to the north of Carchemish. This in itself is suggestive; since no campaign in or tribute from Bit Bahiani is mentioned, it implies that the territory through which the Assyrian army would have passed to get to Kummuḫ was already under Assyrian control, thus strengthening the possibility that the eponym could indeed be identified with the father of the Assyria-oriented Had-Itʿi and also that Guzana was established as a province well before the status recorded by Adad-nirari III in 808 B.C.

It is important to establish as closely as possible the grounds for dating the reliefs independent of the ivories, so as to avoid circularity. If the ivories are themselves dated by comparison to North Syrian reliefs, and then selected reliefs are dated by the ivories, we become mired in a self-reflexive (and self-serving) series of tautologies. However, before we pursue questions of chronology, it would be well to enumerate the extraordinary series of parallels between the reliefs and ivories.

Many of the salient features of the two sets are enumerated by Moortgat in *Tell Halaf III*, and then commented upon by Helene Kantor in her review article of that volume.[40] They are further discussed by both Orthmann and Genge.[41] The parallels noted concentrate on the treatment of animal bodies, especially lions and sphinxes, and include identical stylized rendering of details such as tufted manes, braided hair along the line of the belly, hatched dorsal border, incised ribs and flame-shaped markings on rear flanks. To this list may be added the highly schematic segmented pattern at the joints of the hind legs, and markings on forepaws. These details are best seen in specific comparisons, for example, between a small ivory pyxis of the Loftus Group from the Burnt Palace at Nimrud and one of the large orthostats from Tell Halaf (figs. 1 & 2).

Although the parallels are clearest with the large Tell Halaf lion, the care in rendering it and the stylization of the body mirrors exactly that of the lion on the ivory pyxis; the same details, executed in a more schematic fashion, are observable on the small orthostats as well (cf. fig. 3). This would support Kantor's view that we are dealing not with a true stylistic evolution, but rather with developing refinements and increased skill on the part of the sculptors in the interval between the two sets of carving.[42]

On the ivories, in addition to lions, these body-markings are found only on sphinxes and griffins, where the leonine component of the

---

[40] Kantor, *JNES* 15, pp. 171–74.

[41] Orthmann, *Untersuchungen*, pp. 165–67; Genge, *Nordsyrisch-sudanatolische Reliefs*, pp. 134–42.

[42] See Kantor, *JNES* 15, p. 172, following Moortgat, *Tell Halaf III*, p. 24. In fact, one could even use this parity between large and small orthostats, divided only by competence, not style, as evidence for their contemporaneity. In the Hilani of Bar Rakib at Zincirli, as a parallel case, although the whole series of orthostats was conceived as a unit, better-skilled sculptors were reserved for the larger reliefs of the king and servants immediately adjacent to the doorways, while less-skilled carvers did the processions of additional servants that followed (see Orthmann, *Untersuchungen*, pl. 63b, c and f, as compared with pl. 64a and c).

mischwesen makes their use appropriate; however, on the reliefs, they characterize, with varying degrees of competence, the rendering of sphinx, bull, caprid, and chimera alike (cf. figs. 4, 5 and 8).[43] This indiscriminate application is an important part of the argument that details as well as motifs were transferred wholesale from the ivories to the reliefs.

A number of other parallels may be pointed out across the repertoire of North Syrian ivories and Tell Halaf reliefs. On an ivory panel showing a winged sphinx before a voluted tree, found in Room SW37 of Fort Shalmaneser at Nimrud, for example, we find a representation virtually identical to one of the small orthostats from Tell Halaf in the flexed haunches, double row of wing feathers, frontal face with long framing hair-curls, and raised forepaw (figs. 6 and 8). The floppy cap traditionally worn by winged sphinxes on the ivory pyxides is the same as that worn by a kneeling spearman on one of the reliefs (figs. 7 and 9); while his posture is identical with that of a bowman on a small fragment of a pyxis, where we see the same stock proportions, hind knee bent under and front leg extended, and the same belted kilt with hatched center panel.[44] Parallels also may be found in the violent confrontations between men and lions, or between lions and bulls.[45] The particular form of the North Syrian volute tree, with vertical, very leafy fronds issuing from the volutes, and a combination of both up- and down-turned volutes is also similar (figs. 10 and 11). And finally, the motif of a chariot hunt, with a dog running beneath the belly of the horse, is shared in the repertoires of both ivories and orthostats, with close correspondence in the prancing posture of the horses and their shoulder ornaments (figs. 12 and 13).[46]

Such remarkably close correspondences would warrant speculation of a common source for both ivories and reliefs, even if the only ivories we knew were those from Nimrud. However, it is also the case that

---

[43] Cf., Orthmann, *Untersuchungen*, pls. 8f, 9b, c, 10b, 11e, f, g, 12a, c.

[44] R. D. Barnett, *A Catalogue of the Nimrud Ivories*, 2nd ed., London 1975, pl. 39: S. 65z.

[45] E.g., Orthmann, *Untersuchungen*, pls. 9b and 11e, compared with Barnett, *Catalogue*, pyxides S. 2, 20 and S. 5, 74, 158c.

[46] Although, of course, this theme is also found in the ninth century reliefs of Carchemish (Orthmann, *Untersuchungen*, pl. 37b), the parallels between the ivory and Tell Halaf carving are far closer than either to Carchemish, especially in the position of the horses, and presence of shoulder ornaments, as well as in the absence of a yoke-pole strap, visible at Carchemish and on contemporary reliefs of Assurnasirpal II from Nimrud.

several fragments of ivory, which are in this same North Syrian style, were found at Tell Halaf itself. They include parts of lion bodies with identical markings to the Nimrud pieces and to the reliefs; pieces of a pyxis with goats' feet, that have the same delicate striated markings as on an inlaid pyxis from Nimrud and can also be related to a relief from Tell Halaf with an identical pair of goats flanking a tree; and finally, on the same pyxis, fragments of parts of the lower trunk of a volute tree with down-turned curls at the base, as on many of the ivories and reliefs.[47] Thus, despite the very fragmentary condition of the ivories from Tell Halaf, they provide a crucial link between the more complete works from Nimrud and the reliefs, which demonstrate access at the site to the style and motifs of the larger ivory corpus.

The correspondences are so close as to preclude vague notions of membership in a general "North Syrian *koine*." Although the reliefs of Tell Halaf have been shown to share many elements of style (facial physiognomy and proportions) and iconography (chimerae, "Humbaba" combats, and chariot hunts) with reliefs of other ninth century states of North Syria and southeastern Anatolia, none of the other groups of reliefs comes so close to the ivories, nor to each other. Each can be demonstrated to be a coherent local manifestation, with its own properties that distinguish the sub-group and set it apart from the others.

Since this is not the case in the relationship apparent between the Tell Halaf reliefs and the ivories, however, one must seek another explanation for the phenomenon. The confluence of reliefs and ivories at the same site could certainly give rise to the hypothesis that the ivories were manufactured at Tell Halaf, and distributed from there to other parts of the ancient Near East, with the fixed monuments, the reliefs, providing the "local" style from which the ivories were copied, or to which the ivories also belonged.[48]

---

[47] See Hrouda, *Tell Halaf IV*, pl. 9 bottom, as compared with our figs. 1, 2 and 3; pl. 10 bottom, as compared with Opitz and Moorgat, *Tell Halaf III*, pl. 86a and Barnett, *Catalogue*, S. 48; and *Tell Halaf IV*, pl. 10 bottom, again, as compared with our fig. 11 (or, even better, *Tell Halaf III*, pls. 71–76) and Barnett, *Catalogue*, S. 31 a–c. In addition, several female heads in the round, with high polos and long hair curls, were found in the same grave as the animal-body fragments, and appear identical to examples from Nimrud: cf. *Tell Halaf III*, pl. 9 above, compared to Barnett, *Catalogue*, pls. 70–73.

[48] This argument has in fact been used by the present author as a general rule (see *AnSt* 33, p. 185). Its application, however, is contingent upon demonstration that there is no reason *not* to apply it. Suggestions why Tell Halaf should not conform to this rule are developed below.

Against this is generally marshaled the evidence of the extreme crudity of the reliefs when compared to the subtle, modeled carving of the ivories.[49] It is certainly conceivable that the Tell Halaf reliefs are crude because they are *earlier* than the ivories. It is also conceivable that the discrepancy in quality is due rather to differing degrees of excellence in two different but contemporary media. For example, to take a case in reverse, with all of the delicacy of modeling and plasticity achieved in Neo-Assyrian reliefs of the ninth century, it would appear that Assyrian ivory carving was confined to incision.[50] Drawing is comparable, but not mastery of technique. So it could be the case that the region of Tell Halaf simply excelled in the carving of ivory and was undeveloped in the carving of stone. After all, we know that elephants were ranging in the Ḫabur area, since Assyrian kings Tiglath-pileser I and Assurnasirpal II hunt them there; and the second millennium ivories from Tell Fakhariyeh provide a historical precedent for ivory work in the area.[51]

Nevertheless, at Tell Halaf, the ivories surpass the reliefs by such a distance, not only in technique, but also in drawing, composition, and overall conception, that it is difficult to conceive of them as co-products of a contemporary culture. In the case of the Assyrian reliefs and ivories, the same mastery of drawing is evident; it is only in technique that the two sets differ. At Tell Halaf, by contrast, quality of drawing as well as execution separates the two media.

The solutions of Riis, Moortgat, and Kantor are clearly that imported ivories provided not only the stimulus, but the models for the reliefs; and this is amplified by Kantor's observation that the closer the Tell Halaf reliefs are to known ivories, the better their overall composition; when they diverge, it is always to the loss of the coherence of the scene (as with our fig. 3, where the bowman seems to stand on the back of the animal he is hunting).

---

[49] Mellink, *AJA* 62, p. 439: "The poor quality of the small orthostats belies the lack of a local sculptural tradition at Halaf."

[50] See M. E. L. Mallowan and L. G. Davies, *Ivories in Assyrian Style*, Ivories from Nimrud, 1949–1963, fasc. 2 (Aberdeen, 1970).

[51] Grayson, *Assyrian Royal Inscriptions* 2, paragraphs 44 and 681; H. J. Kantor, in D. McEwan et al., *Soundings at Tell Fakhariyah*, pp. 57–68 (although the lack of any Mitannian elements on the Fakhariyah ivories, as noted by Kantor, calls into question their origin in the region, it is possible that they, too, were imports from elsewhere in the 2nd millennium).

> The ivories surpass the sculptures, suggesting that the stone-cutters at Tell Halaf, when suddenly called upon to produce large-scale sculptures, had at hand a well-established tradition for the representation of animals, but for more elaborate compositions, had to eke out their own clumsy inventions…[52]

In the end, any discussion of which medium may have provided the model for the artisans must be predicated at least to some extent upon chronology. Unless we can demonstrate that North Syrian ivories of this type were contemporary with, or better yet, existed prior to, the suggested dates for the carving of the Tell Halaf reliefs, we cannot hope to establish the directionality of the stimulus.

We may now return, therefore, to the dating of the ivories. Circumstantial evidence supporting the presence of quantities of finished ivory goods of high quality in the possession of North Syrian states during the ninth century B.C. is provided by references in Assyrian tribute lists and visual records of Assurnasirpal II and Shalmaneser III.[53] Unfortunately, however, only Hasanlu provides a secure archaeological context within the ninth century for ivory fragments of the identical stylistic group we are discussing;[54] and that date is merely a *terminus ante quem*, corresponding to the destruction of Hasanlu toward the end of the century. It does not place the ivories at the 880/860 B.C. date suggested by Genge for the reliefs.

The best, if not wholly secure, evidence comes from Tell Halaf itself. At least some ivory fragments belonging to the North Syrian animal style were found in a grave below a statue of a seated female.[55] It is

---

[52] Kantor, *JNES* 15, p. 173; see also on this the comments of Canby, in *Ebla to Damascus*, p. 338.

[53] Grayson, *Assyrian Royal Inscriptions* 2, paragraphs 584, 602; Luckenbill, *ARAB I*, paragraphs 475, 476, 585, 593; L. W. King, *The Bronze Reliefs from the Gates of Shalmaneser, King of Assyria* (London, 1915), pls. 28 and 33, and discussion in Winter, "Carved Ivory Furniture Panels from Nimrud: A Coherent Subgroup of the North Syrian Style," *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 11 (1976): 53.

[54] For example, sphinxes with identical body-markings and pointed caps as our fig. 7: cf. O. W. Muscarella, *Catalogue of Ivories from Hasanlu, Iran*, University Museum Monographs, vol. 40 (Philadelphia, 1980). See the discussion on chronology, pp. 218–20, and especially catalogue nos. 226, 227, 229. Also see the discussion in Winter, "Phoenician and North Syrian Ivory Carving in Historical Context," *Iraq* 38 (1976): 15.

[55] See discussion in Genge, *Nordsyrisch-südanatolische Reliefs*, p. 134, and references in Orthmann, *Untersuchungen*, p. 552: X/1. The ivories, fragments of animal bodies, are illustrated in Opitz and Moortgat, *Tell Halaf III*, fig. 10 and Hrouda, *Tell Halaf IV*, pl. 9 bottom (and discussed, pp. 9–10, 21, and 117). Orthmann notes that it is not certain whether other fragments were found with these or not. Although in the catalog Hrouda gives the same provenance for the female heads in the round and the

unfortunate that the stratigraphic control of the early Halaf excavations is not better, for one simply cannot be certain that this grave was not sunk from a later period; however, the style of the associated sculpture argues for its placement no later than the Kapara palace period,[56] which would thus put the ivory work in direct contemporaneity with at least the later phase of carving at the site.

In summary, then, the arguments that support the view that ivory carvings of North Syrian style were the source for (at least some of)[57] the reliefs from Tell Halaf include: 1) the known mobility of these ivories in this period; 2) the identity, not just similarity, of specific stylizations and motifs; 3) the wholesale transfer of certain stylizations, like the flame-shaped markings on haunches, to animals where they do not belong, thus suggesting "copying" on the reliefs; and finally, 4) the shared general chronological range for the two media.

I would emphasize that the above in no way confirms that the ivories preceded and were used as models for the reliefs; rather, the evidence at present merely *does not disconfirm* such a reconstruction. The ivory objects themselves, especially the small pyxides, no larger than 6–8 cm in height and easily held in hand, would then have served in a manner no different from the "pattern books" so often hypothesized in the absence of alternatives as the means of transferring motifs and styles.

The present article is not the forum in which to discuss the likely place of origin of this particular group of ivories within North Syria. I would simply point out that I do not find the suggestions of Riis and others that Hama (ancient Hamath) was the center of production to

---

goat-and-tree pyxis fragments (*Tell Halaf IV*, p. 21), in the discussion (p. 9) he is only certain about the association of the female heads and the animal bodies.

[56] Genge, *Nordsyrisch-sudanatolische Reliefs*, p. 134.

[57] I do not wish to oversimplify the issue. Both Kantor and Genge outline the evidence for continuity within the Ḫabur region from the Mitannian period (*JNES* 15, p. 108; *Nordsyrisch-sudanatolische Reliefs*, pp. 131–33); connections to sculpture from Carchemish on the one hand and Assyria on the other have been referred to at various points above; and it is not impossible that other portable objects, in addition to the ivories, could have been used as models for the Halaf reliefs. In particular, one may cite a group of chased and inlaid gold plaques, possibly part of a scabbard, found in a grave below the level of Kapara's palace (Hrouda, *Tell Halaf IV*, pl. 1: 1–7). They represent two goats opposite a tree and a bull with forward horns and legs that seem to hang from the body without supporting weight. The motifs and the style can be compared directly to the reliefs (cf. Moortgat, *Tell Halaf III*, pl. 86a, Orthmann, *Untersuchungen*, pl. 8c, for example). However, none of these additional possible sources for the reliefs takes away from the equally important, even dominant, role of the ivories—particularly as the motif of two goats opposite a tree occurs in ivory as well as in the gold.

be convincing, simply because two fragments of carved plaques in this style were found there,[58] any more than the presence of a clay plaque in the same style from Zincirli is sufficient to prove that it originated in Sam'al.[59] Given the mobility of the ivories through commercial exchange, booty, tribute, or gifting—all of which can be demonstrated in our period,[60] without considerably more evidence for workshops, or for shared traditions with other media at a particular center, one cannot argue for one candidate over another.

This does not preclude our construct that the ivories were indeed imports into Tell Halaf, however. If the Hama hypothesis is not convincing, neither is the suggestion that the ivories came from Tell Halaf itself. The absolute identity between ivories and reliefs in stylistic details and their dissimilarity in quality and conception argue against both being of local manufacture. So does the circumstantial evidence preserved in the important, Ninurta Temple inscription of Assurnasirpal II in which Bit Bahiani is mentioned.[61] Tribute from the state is itemized as chariots, horses, silver, gold, tin, bronze, and bronze cauldrons. Directly following this account, as part of the same march, we are given the tribute coming first from Bit Adini, immediately to the west, and then from Carchemish, across the Euphrates. In both of the latter cases, the same chariots, horses, and precious metals are listed; however to this list is also added a considerable assortment of finished goods, including quantities of ivory dishes, couches, chests, and thrones.[62] The implications to be read from such detailed accounts is that Bit Bahiani was not as wealthy as either Bit Adini or Carchemish, and that it had nowhere near the same degree of luxury goods at its disposal. Specifically, the omission of ivory at least serves to support our hypothesis that Tell Halaf was not an important center of ivory production, or even accumulation.

What remains is to provide some explanation of the cultural and historical context in which such a dynamic of imported goods as stimulus for large-scale sculpture could have been operative; and in fact there is only one way in which all of the historical factors known for the period

---

[58] As first argued by Riis, and Barnett, and as followed by Genge (cf. discussion, with bibliography, in Genge, *Nordsyrisch-sudanatolische Reliefs*, pp. 135ff.).

[59] Illustrated in F. von Luschan, *Ausgrabungen in Sendschirli V* (Berlin, 1943), pl. 9: i; and discussed in Winter, *North Syria*, pp. 362–63.

[60] See discussion in Winter, *North Syria*, pp. 407–29.

[61] Grayson, *Assyrian Royal Inscriptions* 2, paragraph 584.

[62] Ibid., paragraph 584.

plus the peculiar turn-about of inspiration from minor to major scale may be understood. That is that the ivory was deemed important in the Ḥabur—not only economically valuable, but sufficiently valuable in cultural terms that its use as a prime model was acceptable, if not desirable.[63]

I believe the key to the Tell Halaf scenario lies in the fact of the presence of elephants, and hence of ivory as a raw material, in the Ḥabur; followed by the hypothesis that ivory was not actually worked there. Rather, the tusks would have been shipped out to be worked elsewhere—to a place with a class of highly skilled artisans producing for a luxury tradition, and sufficient market for the luxury goods to sustain the industry (the most likely place in this case being Carchemish, a commercial center very near by, with which Tell Halaf had connections in the ninth century, as demonstrable through common elements in their reliefs). And since the ivory would have been not only a local resource, but possibly also a source of livelihood for the provincial Ḥabur capital, the finished ivory carvings—some of which would then have been shipped back to Tell Halaf—took on sufficient importance to become the models for the reliefs.

To the extent that we can recognize coherent sub-groups of the North Syrian style, I discuss the evidence for their association with multiple centers of production within the North Syrian region on other occasions, as well as the likelihood that Carchemish in particular would have been exporting influence, craftsmen, and goods.[64]

---

[63] There is one other case known to me in the art-historical record in which a close relationship existed between the work of ivory carvers and sculpture in stone, and that is at the Buddhist site of Sānchī in central India. On one of the jambs of the Southern Gateway of the Great Stupa, an inscription records that the carving itself was done by the "ivory-workers of Vidiśā" (cf. Sir J. H. Marshall, *Monuments of Sānchī*, Calcutta, 1940, pp. 117, 342). It is an interesting case, but significantly different from what we find at Tell Halaf, for at Sānchī, Marshall observes how perfectly the craftsmen adapted their technique to stone, at the same time preserving the refinement and delicate modeling characteristic of ivory carving (ibid., pp. 120–21). He suggests that the explanation for this is to be found in the absence of a developed stone-carving tradition in Vidiśā, so that when it came time for the wealthy patrons of that town, amongst others of the area, to commission work for the temple, they called upon local craftsmen "accustomed to work in other materials" (ibid., p. 153). In the Sānchī case, then, it is the skilled ivory workers themselves who execute work in stone. At Tell Halaf, we would argue, it is relatively unskilled local carvers who use the work of skilled ivory carvers as models for their stone reliefs.

[64] Winter, *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 11, esp. p. 53; idem, *AnSt* 33, esp. pp. 186, 196. The exclusion of Tell Halaf from this production must be viewed in terms of the relatively recent settlement by Arameans at the site, as distinct from the more established

An essential perspective comes from the broader evidence provided by modern economic geography, which deals with the importance of such centers not only in terms of the control of resources sufficient for production, but also in terms of the importance of subsequent means of distribution. Christaller, for example, notes that while raw materials are collected from the periphery of "central places," luxury goods are most economically manufactured at or around urban centers where consumers congregate, or from which travel sets out.[65] Haggett specifies that industrial activities are more likely to be located near the place from which the goods will be distributed as merchandise than near the sources of the raw material.[66] And to this may be added the frequently attested practice of shipping finished goods as partial payment back to the original source of the material, as with Greek metal vases distributed within the Halstatt mining complex, from which the Greeks were getting some of their metals.[67]

All of these factors provide the framework in which to see the specific situation of Tell Halaf/Guzana in the ninth century B.C. Once we posit that the ivories found at Tell Halaf were not manufactured there, and that the similarities in style and content between the reliefs of Tell Halaf and the ivories were the result of copying from the ivories into stone and not vice-versa, we must seek for the particular socio-economic dynamics that would explain this unusual direction of the artistic process. Such dynamics are best understood in terms of the situation of Tell Halaf within the Ḫabur basin, near presumed sources of ivory; of the shipment of tusks to and manufacture of ivories at nearby centers, such as Carchemish, which were considerably more developed in the period than the relatively recent Aramean settlements in the Ḫabur; of the reshipment of a portion of the finished pieces as luxury goods back to Tell Halaf; and then the use of the ivories, which would have had importance as a local resource, and possibly also as a source of the site's income, as appropriate inspiration for the reliefs. We would thus see the Tell Halaf reliefs as not merely manifesting a dependence upon the ivories in the absence of a developed artistic tradition of its

---

Luwian urban centers, such as Carchemish or Patina, or even those places, like Bit Adini or Samʾal, where an Aramean population simply replaced, or integrated, with the previous Luwian residents.

[65] W. Christaller, *Central Places in Southern Germany* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1966 [originally published Jena, 1933]), p. 20.

[66] P. Haggett, *Locational Analysis in Human Geography* (London, 1965), p. 136.

[67] See D. Clarke, *Analytical Archaeology* (London, 1968), p. 420.

own, but as purposefully absorbing, emulating even, the "high-class" artistic production of important centers to the West, via a medium of particular cultural and economic importance to the local region, and at a time when historically the state was oriented toward its sister Aramean and Luwian states in the West, not toward Assyria.
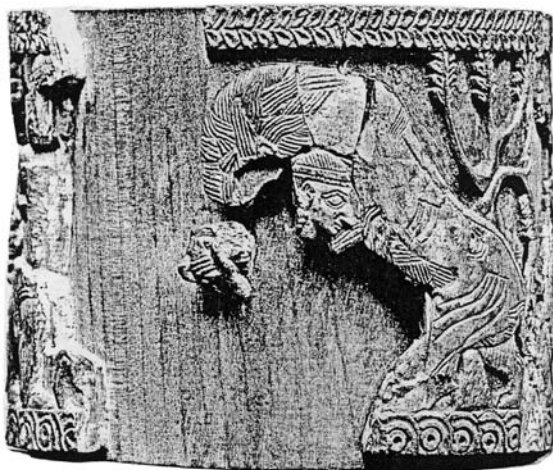
Figure 1. Nimrud: Ivory Pyxis. Lion Combat. Ht. 8.5 cm. Burnt Palace.

Figure 2. Tell Halaf: Large Orthostat, Basalt. Walking Lion. Ht. 1.5 m.
Formerly in the Tell Halaf Museum, Berlin.

Figure 3. Tell Halaf: Small
Orthostat, Basalt. Bowman and Lion.
Ht. 0.61 m.

Figure 5. Tell Halaf: Small
Orthostat, Limestone. Rampant
Goat. Ht. 0.62 m.

Figure 4. Nimrud: Ivory Pyxis. Griffin Slayer. Ht. 5.8 cm. Burnt Palace.

Figure 6. Nimrud:
Ivory Plaque. Winged
Sphinx. Ht. 8.8 cm. Fort
Shalmaneser.

Figure 7. Nimrud: Ivory Pyxis. Winged
Sphinx. Ht. 7 cm. Burnt Palace.

Figure 8. Tell Halaf: Small
Orthostat, Basalt. Winged Male
Sphinx. Ht. 0.64 cm.

Figure 9. Tell Halaf: Small
Orthostat, Basalt. Kneeling
Spearman. Ht. 0.57 m.

Figure 10. Nimrud: Ivory Pyxis Fragment. Sphinxes Opposite Tree.
Ht. 6 cm. Burnt Palace.

Figure 11. Tell Halaf: Small Orthostat, Limestone.
Volute Tree. Ht. 0.67 m.

Figure 12. Nimrud: Ivory Pyxis (same as pl. 62a). Chariot Hunt.

Figure 13. Tell Halaf: Small Orthostat, Basalt. Chariot Hunt. Ht. 0.53 m.

CHAPTER TEN

ESTABLISHING GROUP BOUNDARIES:
TOWARD METHODOLOGICAL REFINEMENT IN THE
DETERMINATION OF SETS AS A PRIOR CONDITION
TO THE ANALYSIS OF CULTURAL CONTACT AND/OR
INNOVATION IN FIRST MILLENNIUM B.C.E.
IVORY CARVING

The analysis of material culture, particularly luxury goods, as a means of determining cultural contact or innovation is essentially an exercise in comparison and classification: the first condition requiring spatial coordinates, the second temporal. In essence, the distinction corresponds to what used to be called 'diffusion' vs. 'independent invention' in the anthropological literature of the 1950s, until it was realized that *both* trends exist simultaneously in any dynamic cultural system and must be assessed in terms of degrees of each—internal development and external receptivity—not absolutes of opposition! To pursue such an analytical exercise effectively requires the *a priori* establishment of 'boundaries'—between large culture areas such as Egypt and the Levant, for example, between regions, such as Phoenicia and Syria; or between smaller production units within regions, such as distinctive workshops or hands. For, to know whether there has been 'contact' between any two entities demands first that one knows that the two entities can be divided one from the other, while to know whether or not there has been 'innovation' requires that discrete and definable sets be measured before and after a given datum. Both of these assessments depend upon the identification of appropriate variables for observation, resulting in entities that can either be joined to or divided from one another.

The present paper constitutes a cry for explicit, rigorous, and consciously-applied criteria in arguments related to the establishment of such sets, using the Phoenician and Syrian luxury goods from the

Levant—particularly ivory carving—as the ground from which to then speak about artistic production and cultural contact in the early first millennium B.C.E. These works are the product of archaeological recovery, often found far from their presumed places of manufacture; and part of the problem with our incomplete and less-than-ideal archaeological record is, of course, that often the claimed markers (or artifacts) for establishing distinct groups—stylistic, typological, technological—constitute the only 'evidence' we have for those very boundaries, so that we are more prone than is comfortable to circularity of argument (see on this problem, Cowgill 1970). Nevertheless, it is argued that with rigorous analysis, the works can yield significant information about both production and cultural interaction.[1]

The study of innovation requires historical depth: the requisite minimum of two measuring points in some temporal sequence permits demonstration of change from a prior state to a new one. Cultural contact can be claimed at a single point in time, but only if characteristic 'markers' have first been associated with one discrete cultural entity and then observed to appear in another. Ideally, this phenomenon too must be able to be measured diachronically, establishing first the moments 'before' contact and then 'after' through the absence/presence of such markers. And, if we are to avoid the circularity noted above, it is useful to draw upon additional, corroborating evidence for historical contact—linguistic, textual, or other artifactual.

Many studies of contact and/or innovation have been undertaken in our field; nevertheless, progress notwithstanding, we have yet to achieve either systematic and rigorous guidelines for adequate observation and the construction of variables, or the means to evaluate the adequacy of criteria used for interpretation. Notably missing is the development of an appropriate scale for measuring the *intensity* of cultural contact and interaction as distinct from the mere presence/absence of identifiable other-cultural elements (on which, see Winter 2000). An important next step in the development of our analytical tools, therefore, would be to find ways to assess the permeability of boundaries between cultural/historical entities and the nature of interaction/absorption, beyond the

---

[1] Note, however, the cautions expressed in Lilyquist 1998, concerning the premature use of artifacts, particularly ivory carvings, as evidence for inter-cultural political connections; also in Flood 2001, regarding the frequency of paradox and inconsistency in textual support, and thus the complexity of the historiographic analysis when scholars attempt to contextualize visual culture in terms of broader cultural interaction.

merely impressionistic—for example, the 'degrees' of 'Egyptian-ness' in Phoenician ivories (usually called 'a lot' or 'strong'), South Syrian ivories ('somewhat less') and North Syrian ('none' or 'a lot less than the other two'). We further need to establish adequate markers of *both* places concerned if we are to argue for contact between them; and we need sufficient chronological controls to establish, for example, whether the egyptianizing elements observed in the first millennium Phoenician ivories are the product of first millennium interaction *or* represents a legacy left within the region from second millennium interaction that has since been subject to internal development. The motif of an egyptianizing male walking with animals, represented on ivory plaques found at Nimrud (Herrmann 1992: nos. 298–303, pls. 56–61), could in fact represent either first millennium contact with Egypt (on which, see Niwiński 2000; Gubel 2000b) or a legacy from the second, as a plaque from Ras Shamra makes clear that the motif was already known in the Levant in the earlier period (Desroches-Noblecourt 1956: fig. 181). Similarly, comparison of the Ras Shamra ivory bed with one of the SW7 chair panels from Nimrud suggests that there was significant continuity across the millennial divide in techniques of furniture making, joining and mounting of plaques into larger panels (Schaeffer 1954: pls. viii–x; Mallowan and Herrmann 1974: pl. I), just as the griffin-slayer mirror-handle from Enkomi suggests continuity in motif to the same motif found on ivories of both Phoenician and North Syrian style in the first millennium (e.g., Kantor 1960: fig. 24; Herrmann 1986: pl. 71). In short, while Gubel (2000a: 210) has made a good case for revitalized Egyptian influence upon the art of the Levant in the early first millennium, we need to factor in possibilities of second-to-first millennium continuities within the Levant before we can speak confidently of first millennium inter-cultural contact, perhaps seeing some motifs as illustrative of the former, while others are the product of the latter.

With these examples in mind, the present paper raises questions related to determination of and criteria for weighting attributes argued to be both diagnostic and discriminatory, as we move toward a taxonomy that will enable us to reconstruct production units appropriate to the ivories of the early first millennium B.C.E. in the Ancient Near East. I should like to focus here on the requisite steps in set formation and boundary recognition, with the understanding that well-defined variables and adequate measurement devices are required to deal with the establishment of groups to be studied in the first place, before issues of change, innovation and contact can be studied. In other words,

a prior step to speaking about trade, gifting, influence and/or emula-
tion is to determine accurately the point of origin of those goods that
have been preserved to us in the archaeological record; just as a prior
step to speaking about production units and their economic conse-
quences—professional workshops vs. cottage industries, hierarchies of
manufacture, or centers of production—is the determination of stylistic
and other criteria sufficient to distinguish sets and sub-sets.

Group determination, hence boundary recognition, rests largely upon
systematic description and the implicit or explicit ranking of variables.
For the ivories of the first half of the first millennium B.C.E., I have
argued elsewhere (congruent with Dirk Wicke's paper in the present
volume) that 'iconography,' or subject matter, is not as good an indi-
cator of hand, school or place as is 'style,' or way of rendering, since
many themes—for example, the use of certain motifs in equestrian
ornaments—cross media, existing in both ivory and bronze, and also
cross linguistic and political boundaries (see Winter 1988). The motif
of a composite, winged animal, for example, may be seen on Phoeni-
cian- and (South) Syrian-style equestrian blinkers from Nimrud as well
as on North Syrian/Anatolian-style blinkers from Gordion and else-
where, and the same motif is also depicted on blinkers worn by horses
in sculpture and relief from the kingdoms of Sam'al and Assyria (see
Wicke 1999: figs. 4, 13, 19, 24, 29–30). We therefore have a motif (and
presumably a meaning for the motif) that is common to at least West
Semitic/Aramaic, Luwian and Akkadian-speaking polities. That there
may well have been some locale-specific or production-group-specific
themes seems evident, and may be argued for individual cases; however
once popular, motives can and do cross both time and space with ease,
making them less sensitive indicators when the issue of origins is under
consideration than the idiosyncracies of 'facture,' or style.

Apart from the rare cases in which the origins of style are purpose-
fully obscured for historically arguable reasons (see Feldman 2002),
style is generally associated with 'hand' (Sauerlander 1983). 'Hands'
produce individual works, the characteristics of which we, as analysts,
recognize as style. In instances where we have evidence for the mobility
of craftsmen through elite exchange, migration or capture (e.g., Sasson
1990: 24), the movement of styles becomes a possibility that must be
taken seriously; and we are fortunate that the textual record of the
Ancient Near East is so rich in letters, administrative archives and annals
that record such artisanal movement. However, the presumption of a
professional class of mobile craftsmen has often stood as an unexamined

'black box' explanation when all else fails—as in the insistence that the only way to explain the bronze shields from the Idean Cave is by the displacement of Near Eastern craftsmen to Crete (see broad discussion in Hoffman 1997; also Braun-Holzinger & Matthäus 2000; Boardman 2000: 326). For the most part, 'style' is both more local and more locatable than iconography, whether vested in the individual, the workshop, the locale, the broader region or the period as a whole. In general, therefore, it is style—tied not to the more transmittable repertoire, but to praxis—that becomes the principal criterion by which attribution is determined—whether at the micro-level of individual hand, or at the macro-level of region or period.

Now, this is surely a truism within the History of Art, stylistic analysis being a technique long applied by connoisseurs and classifiers, and theorized since the mid-nineteenth century as determination of the 'hand' of a master intersected with issues of value, both financial and cultural. But each subfield has its own history of making such determinations operative, and the Ancient Near East has not been exempt from debates surrounding attribution studies.

As we seek to explore the explanatory potential of attribution studies, I am persuaded that only if we agree to discuss our underlying assumptions and explicitly rank-order the power of our diagnostic variables will we make empirical progress. To that end, I submit that no one in our subfield can approach such problems without *both* a familiarity with recent debates in anthropological archaeology concerning classification and typology, on the one hand, and a familiarity with the art historical literature of connoisseurship—in particular, the work of Giovanni Morelli and John Beazley, among others—on the other.

Morelli is best known for his argument that the individual hand betrays itself in 'unconscious ways of making'—observable in the shapes of ears or the patterns of garment folds. He distinguished these unconscious traces from the more conscious aspects of detail and rendering that an artist or workshop would do by design, and which through imitation or reference could actually obscure authorship. Morelli then used his diagnostic features to distinguish the work of various Renaissance masters. His principles, published in 1892 as *Italian Painters. Critical Studies of their Works. The Borghese and Doria Galleries in Rome*, became the foundation for all attribution studies of the late nineteenth and twentieth century.

Beazley worked on the establishment of individual 'hands' in the study of Greek vase painting for virtually all of his professional life,

relying largely upon his experience and self-styled 'eye' (Beazley 1951: 2) to justify the grouping of works under the rubric of a single master or workshop (see recent discussion in Neer 1997, and complete bibliography of Beazley's works in Ashmolean Museum 1967). That he was so often accurate is a testimony both to his experience and his eye; but he was also notoriously reluctant to discuss methodology or to make explicit his criteria for a given attribution (Neer 1997: 16; and see also Roaf 1983: 15).[2] What he shares with Morelli is the fact that his enterprise was essentially classificatory, as is ours with ivories, seals, or indeed any medium that allows for the establishing of clusters toward either an ascription of place of origin or of workshop/hand.

What has changed, however, is the willingness to rely upon the connoisseur's prestige and authority in order to carry the argument; today, one must bring to the table articulate-able criteria both necessary and sufficient to sustain attributions.

To begin an exploration of the methodology, or methodologies, by which we would argue today, I would like to make a case for the need for 'clusters of variables,' as distinct from single or paired elements, if one is going to attempt to establish coherent groups. I dare to use the Attic 'bilingual' vases as a case in point, before moving to works of the Ancient Near East.

These vessels, decorated with narrative panels in black figure on one side, red figure on the other, are dated to the decade of ca. 530–520 B.C.E. Scholarly debate has centered upon whether the differences apparent in rendering of the same themes on opposing sides—Herakles driving a bull to sacrifice (figs. 1 and 2), for example, or Ajax and Achilles casting lots (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 01.8037)—are due to differences inherent in the technical possibilities of drawing and kiln-firing in the two processes, or due to production by different individuals. The terms of this debate have centered on close observation and the articulation of multiple criteria in order to reach a conclusion regarding one artist or two. Thus, issues of spatial composition, relationship to margins and borders, decorative elements, proportion of figures, degrees

---

[2] Beazley ruminated a bit on method in his *Attic Red-Figured Vases in American Museums* of 1918 (p. v, Introduction), when he noted that the "process (of attribution)… consists of drawing a conclusion from observation of a great many details," however he did not make explicit at each moment of attribution just what those details are, how they construe, and why some are more diagnostic than others. As noted by Neer (1997), Beazley 1922 and 1927 come closest to a serious discussion of his 'method' of analysis.

of overlap and small detail rendering have been adduced, and in present scholarly opinion at least, seem to suggest that technical process is *not* enough to account for the apparent differences. Beazley (1951: 75–77) and John Boardman (1988: 105) are of the opinion that a 'general congruence of style,' suggests a single artist. I find myself far more persuaded by the *differences* between the two sides, as pointed out by Beth Cohen (1978) and Susanna Ebbinghaus (personal communication based upon unpublished research, 1990)—especially in the way in which figures pierce the margins in red-figure but not in black, the animation in floral elements or lack thereof, and the details of rendering in beard and face—and so, like them, would put my vote on two different artists. As a next step in the analytical process, the association of the red-figure sides of the bilinguals with the signed work of the Andokides Painter has been used to broaden the cluster; while the stylistic unities of the black-figure sides seem to point to another artist, known as the Lysippides Painter, who is thought to have been a pupil of the great black-figure master, Exekias, particularly in view of Exekias' version of Ajax and Achilles casting lots on a Black-figure amphora (discussed in Beazley 1951: 65). In this way, a picture of the repertoire of a single artist can be built up, as well as relationships between artists. That different painters could have rendered the same motifs is self-evident. What matters in the long run is that, in effect, multi-variate analysis is being used at the most specific level to distinguish similarity and/or difference, leading to conclusions regarding individual 'hand'—in the case of the bi-lingual Greek vases, diagnostic markers in rendering and composition distinguish two artists, while those same or additional markers can be used to link the identified artists to other works, whether as personal products, or in an artistic lineage.[3]

---

[3] It is an aid in the study of Greek vase-making and painting that authorship can sometimes be established by the presence of signatures—potters and painters who declare themselves as such on their products. These signatures then serve as the banners under which to gather unsigned vessels as well. Roaf (1983) has used mason's marks as a substitute for signatures in his study of figures in procession on the Persepolis reliefs, and similar fitters' or carvers' marks on the reverse of some ivories can be used similarly to construct sets (see Millard, this volume). Unfortunately, in the ancient Near East, we have virtually no signed works—with the exception of a brief inscription on a relief slab from Neo-Hittite Karatepe, which names two Luwian individuals, although whether they name themselves as scribes or as sculptors is uncertain (see Laroche 1958; Hawkins 2000: 68–70 [Karatepe 4]). In the determination of viable ivory clusters, however, we are forced to identify tell-tale stylistic markers in lieu of named carvers.

Similar criteria can and should be applied to the corpus of ivory carvings known from Fort Shalmaneser, Nimrud, and beyond to the larger group of ivories known from the early first millennium B.C.E. in the Ancient Near East, since the sample is more than sufficient to allow for both multi-variate and cluster-analysis. Some of the analytical processes employed to date have been described by Georgina Herrmann (1986, 1992, 2000), including the assembling of "like with like," and a dependence upon "the trained eye observant of tiny detail" (Herrmann 2000: 272), which suggests close affinity with Beazley, although always with the diagnostic details articulated. When I questioned some of Georgina Herrmann's groupings some years ago in reviews of her publications of the ivories from Room SW37 of the Fort and from various other rooms (Winter 1992, 1998), it was with issues not of detail, but of the hierarchy of multiple criteria in mind. Herrmann's important attempt to create sub-groups within the ivory assemblage notwithstanding, I felt that the complex problem of attribution had been inappropriately reduced to one or two 'cameo' elements—like the co-variance of flame markings on animal haunches and leafy frond-like wings and plants—as criteria for membership in a given group. To my mind, these criteria needed to be tested against competing 'markers' that, once one began to work with a larger set of variables, I felt could be used to suggest alternative clusters or major sub-divisions within a given group.

For such an enterprise, Whitney Davis' more complex paradigm for stylistic analysis—notably his insistence upon *polythetic sets*, in which each artifact studied was seen to possess a number but not all of the attributes characteristic of the set x large, while no single attribute was to be found in every artifact of the group—seems to have greater utility (Davis 1990: 19).

The problem we face is addressed directly in the archaeological literature dealing with typology (for a history of the 'Typology Debate,' see Hill & Evans 1972, and more recently, Adams & Adams 1991: esp. 278ff.). At issue is the sorting and classification of artifacts toward meaningful groups, using well-formed variables and a conscious determination of appropriate dimensions for measurement (Hunt, n.d.: chs. 3 & 4).[4]

---

[4] For a discussion of why our resultant groups would represent a classificatory system but not necessary a taxonomy, which implies a hierarchy of units, see Adams & Adams 1991: 202ff.; but at the same time, when our groups are ordered hierarchically according to distinctions of hand/workshop/locale, etc., then the levels produced could

I cannot emphasize enough that Herrmann's early attempts at classification were, and remain, important as pilot subdivisions within a corpus happily large enough to yield important clusters. Her choice of the terminology 'groups' for the clusters was also an acute, and I assume purposeful, ambiguity, avoiding the pitfalls of having to assign the resultant sets to individuals, workshops or places. Nevertheless, the fact that one could come up with counter-arguments and/or alternative groupings suggested that the criteria—the distinguishing markers—for the groups were not yet either sufficiently inclusive or decisive. Nor did the analysis include an explicit ranking of variables such that one could argue, for example, that compositional factors like the space between hoofs, or the guilloche borders on pyxides was more or less important than the presence of the so-called 'flame' marking on depicted animals (compare, for example, figs. 3 and 4).

The elevation of unranked variables to diagnostic status and the isolation of reductive markers risk becoming a free-for-all, with the authority of one speaker/interpreter pitted against that of another. The gift of the 'New Archaeology' of the 1960s and 70s was precisely to take away 'argument by authority' or 'experience' (such as relied upon by Beazley), and lay the responsibility instead on the quality of the data and the analysis. Despite considerable resistance in our subfield to such a move, it is my belief that both the data and the analytic processes applied must be as *explicit* as they are *rigorous*, especially since, as with any stylistic analysis, the boundaries between sets are never clear-cut. The case is not unlike that faced by forensic experts who deal with handwriting. For, as is well known, even the same individual has a wide range of signatures, depending upon space available, degree of fatigue or health, time of day, type of document, etc. Where I had not been persuaded by several of the ivory clusters was in how the 'distinctive characteristics' of particular groups—'Flame and Frond,' 'Triple Flower'

---

be said to correspond to individual taxa. That dimensions should be based upon single components susceptible to 'measure' (not necessarily numerically; scales can be nominal, ordinal, interval or ratio), while classes then should represent clusters of dimensions, is discussed in Hunt n.d.: ch. 3, 33–34. The broader issue of whether resultant classification groups, typologies and/or taxonomies are understood to be inherent in an assemblage and discovered through analysis by the analyst or instead are thought to be imposed upon the assemblage by the analyst is hotly debated (Adams & Adams 1991; Hill & Evans 1972); the implications for our materials are not insignificant, whether one uses the groups to discuss production and consumption of luxury goods or cognitive semantics (on which, Lakoff 1987), and would warrant further discussion.

or 'Scaly Wing'—then became the sole defining features, or markers, of a unit. Instead, it seemed necessary to demonstrate as part of the analysis just how such supposedly distinctive characteristics co-varied with other attributes, such as spatial distribution, composition, details, proportion—much as was done for the bilingual Attic vases. Indeed, once such additional attributes were added to the analysis, I felt one could come up with quite different groupings, or at least, different boundaries between sub-sets (Winter 1992: 137–138).

To those added variables—space, composition, detail, proportion—one could also add an assessment of the absorption of 'foreign' or cross-boundary elements, and equally, questions of technique and material. Certainly, the same person can carve furniture plaques intaglio for one purpose and in raised relief for another; however, if one adds technical aspects to the analysis, then *how* the carving is executed becomes yet another among the distinctive traits of individual pieces, significant in some cases, not in others. Such distinctions would include whether carving is deep or shallow, rounded or angular; whether eyes are deep set or not, with drilled pupils or not; how the backs of plaques are treated and whether they include fitters' marks. On occasion, such technological factors may serve as boundary markers, on other occasions, they will not; but only if they are always, not just occasionally, included can their explanatory possibilities be plumbed. Once certain traits can be seen to co-vary with other traits, they will serve to strengthen the arguments for boundaries between diverse works or groupings based upon hand, workshop, locale or region.

In the end, we are never likely to come to perfect agreement on either significant markers or boundaries. But I would like to suggest that before we go ahead and try to establish valid groupings, we work first on the development of a mental checklist of elements that need to be accounted for, from the macro-level (i.e., composition) to the micro-level (i.e., details like the haunch marking). For, and this is a gloss on the limited value of iconography in the determination of work-groups: *if* the flame-marking should turn out to be iconographically significant—i.e., indicating some sacred quality of the animal or association with a deity, as suggested by Helene Kantor many years ago for the lion's shoulder hair whorl (1947)—then one cannot expect it *not* to migrate along with the whole animal body/motif (which *could* explain its presence on works from Hama and Tell Halaf to Nimrud and Hasanlu, and seen as well on a clay plaque from Zincirli/Sam'al—von Luschan 1943: pl. 9i). That is to say, if such a detail also carries meaning, it would not

serve as a good indicator of Morelli's unconscious betrayal of 'hand' or group; nor could it then constitute proof of attribution except within a cultural sphere of shared meaning too broad to be useful. Only if the flame-marking, to stay with that example, can be shown to co-vary consistently and exclusively with a cluster of other attributes would one be safe in ranking it high on a list of operative variables for attribution exercises. And even then, given that Kantor (1956: 173) has shown that such markings cross the divide between the second and the first millennium, to establish just presence/absence is not sufficient; rather, the manner of *rendering* this detail has to be discriminated (compare, for example, the flame markings on lion and sphinx haunches, figs. 3 and 4), and hopefully also then shown to co-vary with ways of rendering in other, less conscious details.

Such clusters of variables are more difficult to extrapolate and to argue for than the isolation of single, defining elements. They presuppose the ranking of individual variables in importance with respect to one another, which then requires careful argument for a given analytical exercise. But I fear that if we do not take the rigor of our arguments up a few notches, we risk falling back on exercises (and historical reconstructions) that will only prove faulty in the long run.

It is important to remember that we are using the resultant classification of ivory carvings to solve quite complex problems: that is, not merely the establishment of 'hands' or 'workshops' as in attribution studies of European painting or Greek vases, but questions of regional/cultural conceptualization and production. I am persuaded that once we acknowledge the complexity of the problems represented by a given sample—whether seals, ivories, metalwork, or reliefs—and the pitfalls therefore of simplifying the analytical process, we will also be able to deal better with the materials. Classical scholars like Beazley actually have had it relatively easy, given centralized production within Athens for most of the high-end pottery under scrutiny. Analysts could therefore concentrate on issues of hand and workshop, without adding problems of locale and region to attribution studies. The situation of production in the Ancient Near East, if present models are accurate, suggests instead a decentralized system of production, with multiple centers participating in the making of luxury goods, both within and across regional borders (Winter 1976; Herrmann 2000). Were this not the case, we would not have the problems we have even to determine whether there is a valid 'South Syrian' group of ivories showing some of the characteristics of both contemporary Phoenician and North

Syrian works, or whether there are sub-sets within one or another of these larger regional groups, in addition to trying to establish the finer criteria for identifying individual hands or local centers.

It seems important to keep in mind that the boundaries between such sets—whether associated with individual hand, workshop, locale, region—are never going to be clear-cut. This is the handwriting/ forensics problem as well: whether observable variations can be said to represent the same individual on different days or at different stages of career, say, or two individuals with some proximity: father teaching son, master teaching apprentice, or partners in a production unit. Equally, boundaries between workshops in a single town, or between towns in a single cultural region, will never be clear-cut; for there will always be shared characteristics that cross sub-set divides, or historical evidence suggesting the movement of individuals, thereby making *some* aspects of the range within workshop production indistinguishable from the larger set of local production, or making local production consonant with the grosser attributes of the overall region.

As but one example, the well-known group of furniture panels from Room SW7 in Fort Shalmaneser are generally attributed to a single center of production, despite the fact that they show a remarkable range of quality in the individual plaques and panels that constitute the chair backs they once decorated (Mallowan & Herrmann 1974; Winter 1976). Within the group, it is easy to make clusters of some of the SW7 plaques that share commonalities of facial features, dress, composition, and floral elements, even if from different panels (e.g., Mallowan & Herrmann 1974: pls. VI & XV); it is much harder to assume that if one local individual were capable of as careful work as is evident in, for example, a panel consisting of plaques showing four standing kilted males and two females, then a neighbor on another bench or across the street in the *souk* could be producing plaques that manifest the awkward shoulders and shortened forearms of male figures in inverted flower-pot helmets (figs. 5 and 6 = Mallowan & Herrmann 1974: pls. LXXVI, XLVIII)! Yet it must be underscored that a similar range occurs in the Parthenon metopes, where Frank Brommer (1967) has argued that, had the individual slabs been found separately, they would have been dated—according not only to quality, but to degrees of progress from 'archaic' to fully realized 'classical'—over a 35-year period; however, all had to have been done within a 6-year period given the construction schedule and their placement on the building.

We must therefore be careful in establishing boundaries of either time or space because of variation in quality alone.

Once we acknowledge that there will be blurred boundaries between virtually *all* sub-sets in real life/history, it becomes all the more incumbent upon us to rank our variables into those of greater and lesser value as criteria in a given argument—for example, whether the sinuous plant stalks and open garments on some of the SW7 plaques should be weighted more or less than differences in quality of execution or the presence of the winged sun disk in one individual plaque as distinct from another when deciding on individual hands or work units (e.g., figs. 6 and 7; and see Mallowan & Herrmann 1974: pls. I, VI, XVIII–XIX, XXI, XXVII, XXVIII). In the end, it is not at all sure we shall be able to recognize and classify all works, placing them definitively on one or another side of a boundary dividing individuals, workshops, and/or localities of production; but with multiple, ranked variables and greater complexity in analysis, we can start to address the problem and to account for the blurred boundaries we do encounter!

That a model of decentralized production is likely to be accurate for the Ancient Near East in the first half of the first millennium B.C.E. is not yet definitively demonstrated; but it is supported by the ethnographic record of Syrian and Anatolian craft production in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, where individual villages contributed goods to markets in regional centers, with the cities then distributing the goods to end consumers. The model seems to fit the textual evidence for the early first millennium B.C.E. as well. Yet this model of multiple centers of production and decentralized manufacture cannot be applied automatically, and can still lead to different conclusions. Herrmann has attributed the large set of ivories she has designated as the 'Flame and Frond' group to Tell Halaf (ancient Guzana), based upon an argued homology between fixed monuments and luxury items (Herrmann 1989)—a relationship that Helene Kantor first, then I, argued as 'too literal,' suggesting instead a reverse formation in which the movable works could have been used as models for the sculptures (Winter 1989). I then sought to locate the production of these ivories in the more sophisticated neighboring center of Carchemish (especially in view of the fact that there actually is a flame marking on the haunch of this animal from the King's Gate, and where other parallels can also be demonstrated between the ivories and reliefs in style, composition, subject matter and overall ornateness!). Herrmann has reviewed this

difference in interpretation (2000: 275–276); what it illustrates is that, when you have two individuals reconstructing very different historical scenarios, it is all the more important for the argument to rest upon the data, weighting of ranked attributes, and criteria of analysis, not on the authority of an individual, or on an assumed but unstated hierarchy of values.

But I would also submit that underlying this particular debate is two different models of production and distribution. My argument in the case of the SW7 ivories had been that, unless other more compelling arguments prevail, one should be able to tie the production of movable goods to places where the fixed monuments manifest the same stylistic (and sometimes iconographic) properties—hence their origin around Zincirli, ancient Sam'al (Winter 1976). Herrmann, in her attribution of the 'Flame and Frond' group to Tell Halaf/Guzana, actually employed this same principle: *if* the Zincirli reliefs share elements with and therefore anchor the SW7 ivories, *then* the Halaf reliefs, with their haunch markings on animals identical to those on the ivories, should anchor the latter group. I, however, was resisting my own prior formulation in this case, emphasizing instead the qualification noted above: *unless other more compelling arguments prevail.* I insisted that a different principle must be active: the rarer dependency of fixed stone monuments upon movable/luxury goods. The historical alternative, that this very sophisticated group of ivories had actually been manufactured in a neighboring polity to the west of Tell Halaf, most likely Carchemish, was based upon the size, importance, wealth and centrality of the latter, which, I felt, was far more conducive to sophisticated luxury production than the smaller, less-developed, and largely politically dependent city-state of Guzana.[5]

How, then, can we hope to make progress in untangling competing hypotheses, given the limits of archaeological evidence and the lack of textual support concerning production? (And I submit that it is important to do so if we hope to make progress in understanding the social organization of artistic production and distribution—either for its own sake or as a prior step toward reconstructing cultural contact and/or innovation.) First, I would suggest that we set up several collective and

---

[5] Such reversals were indeed attested in antiquity, as demonstrated by the inscription on one of the gateways at the early Buddhist site of Sanchi, where the stone carving was dedicated by local ivory carvers (cited in Winter 1989).

collaborative exercises, with a designated body of material amenable to attribute analysis, along the lines of the system used by Michael Roaf in his study of artistic hands and work groups manifest in the carving of the Persepolis reliefs (Roaf 1983).

For Persepolis, Roaf was aided by the presence of sculptor's marks, but could independently construct his clusters on Morellian grounds through the isolation of attributes and details of rendering, the mathematical assessment of resultant patterns through the generation of similarity matrices. Shared features could then be shown to co-vary with the makers' marks on selected reliefs, plotted in dendrograms; and from this, Roaf could then reconstruct the work teams that produced the individual carvings. To mount a similar analysis for the ivories, one could begin with one of Herrmann's groups, such as the 'Flame and Frond' or 'Pointed Ear'; or one could start from scratch. I have wondered, for example, whether we might not profitably investigate the surprisingly understudied female ivory heads, both in the round as part of free-standing female figures, and in relief—including the 'Women at the Window' (Suter 1992), the female sphinxes, and others—applying Morelli's principles as we look at individual facial features, hair rendering, headdress, ornaments, etc. (e.g., figs. 8 and 9). Once those attributes are identified, one can then look to co-variance with secondary, associated elements, such as the rendering of balustrades in the 'Women at the Window' plaques, wing treatment in female sphinxes, etc.), in order to see whether meaningful clusters emerge based upon multivariate analysis (see, for example, Barnett 1975: pls. LXV, LXXII–LXXIII, XCIII, CXXXVI, etc.; Herrmann 1986: pls. 68, 86, 89–92, 103–107, 112–119, 122–123, 142, etc.; 1992: pls. 18, 19, 20, 35, 38, 43, 45, 46, 50, 56, etc.).

Herrmann has already begun the process by suggesting that some 'Women at the Window' from Room S10 of Fort Shalmaneser could represent Phoenician work, while another piece from the same room "may belong to a North Syrian group" (1992: pls. 18 & 19). Yet another female figure, attributed to Herrmann's 'Wig and Wing' group, is said to have close relatives among the ivories found at Khorsabad, and also at Arslan Tash (1992: 30–32), which then allows for broader, cross-site groupings, since we know that such luxury goods could be and *were* distributed well beyond their places of manufacture. Complex to tease apart would be different notions of 'beauty' as distinct from differing aspects of 'style'. Care would need to be taken to not simply buy into Western notions of 'mastery' and value judgments—as calling one

plaque 'The Mona Lisa of Nimrud' and relegating a companion piece to the status of 'The Ugly Sister' (Mallowan 1963)—but rather, to seek indigenous standards of beauty from the ivories themselves, from other contemporary works, from textual evidence, or from the ethno-historic record for later periods. Here, too, the ranking of significant variables is essential—as, for example, not assuming the importance of a tucked 'archaic' smile as a distinguishing characteristic, based upon modern familiarity with early Greek sculpture, when ivories otherwise closely related in hair style and rendering of eyes have different mouths. If we are to use our analytic exercises as attempts to reconstruct processes of craft production in the Ancient Near East, not just as mirrors of ourselves and our own values, then consciousness of methodology and analytical rigor *must* be as important as the results we come up with.

With the greatest of hesitation, therefore, I present a preliminary list of elements that could serve as discriminators in such analytical enterprises, acknowledging at the same time the importance of refining and scaling the list below, such that it might serve as a starting point for future analysis:

I. First step: isolate meaningful units for the particular study (here, ivory carving)
    1. Hand
    2. Workshop
    3. Locale—urban center or its immediate surround
    4. Region—culturally, sometimes ethnically and linguistically, identified as coherent
    5. Period

II. Second step: articulate the progression from more specific to more general characteristics:
    1. Indicative of hand [Morelli, unconscious signature elements; Sauerlander, 'style': stilus]
    • individual facial features
    • proportion of facial features
    • proportion of bodies
    • details of dress or body treatment
    • additive elements [equivalent to 'signature elements,' of limited distribution, co-varying with stylistic evidence for a single hand]
    • relation to edges of spatial field

- composition
- degrees of overlap of elements/figures
- positive-negative space proportions
  [these last 4 then allowing one to expand the group by association, across motifs (it is here that the pyxides are singularly important, as unlike individual plaques, they combine several motifs on a single, relatively small object one *could* argue would have been continuously worked by a single individual, further expanding the repertoire of either individual or set—see, for example, Barnett 1975 (1957): S1, where human-animal combat, chariot hunt, female deity all appear).]
- carving techniques
- mounting techniques
  [this, of course, is where selected diagnostic markers and boundaries become important: whether the hair curls of a lion-slayer, a griffin-slayer and his griffin in conjunction with the low-relief carving and trapezoidal shape of certain plaques permit us to group two related motifs, before determining whether the curls are sufficient to extend the set further to relief and openwork fragments of griffins in combat or opposing a central palmette tree (e.g., Herrmann 1986: from nos. 78–79 to 127–155 to 1054–1055?]
- overall judgments of quality

2. Indicative of Workshop
- commonality of theme despite some individuation of hand
- 'conscious signature elements' that could transcend hand
  [arguments that might permit us to conclude that more than different individuals worked on individual plaques that were then joined into a single panel, as on some of the SW7 chair backs (e.g., Mallowan & Herrmann 1974: no. 2), or even that (as per Roaf 1983 at Persepolis) more than one individual within a common workshop worked on a single plaque]
- general compositional principles
- additive elements [of wider distribution, across more than a single hand]
- similarity in some facial and bodily features, difference in others
- degrees of difference from unconscious elements of hand and carving (need scale)
- range of carving techniques

- mounting techniques
- judgments of quality [with a broader range of performance than for individuals]

3. Indicative of Locale
- general themes
- general compositional principles
- general features
- unusual characteristics / markers localized within a definable area
- shared features with fixed monuments in similar locale
- locally-specific flora and fauna

4. Indicative of Region
- general themes
- general style and features / markers common to both fixed and movable works spread over a wide yet definable area with some geographical and/or cultural unity
- higher degrees of difference or variation in all other elements [needs measurement scale]
- presence of cross-regional elements and/or external elements locally adapted

5. Indicative of Period
- archaeological evidence for findspot/dating [esp. presence of chronologically-bound elements that cross regional boundaries]
- greatest degree of difference or variation in all elements
- some thematic consistency across regional boundaries
- some consistency in associated elements, yet stylistic variation[6]

---

[6] This schema for production units can be kept quite independent of the terminology established for works/sets that emerged in discussion in the closing session of the meeting, and that underlies the present volume. In that terminology, 'component' could represent a single entity that can be part of an object, like one plaque from a larger chair-back panel; 'artifact' could represent one complete object comprised of several component parts, whether by one hand or more than one hand; 'set' would then consist of a clear cluster of 'n' objects of the same sort, or by the same hand, like the SW7 chair-backs, grouped by multiple variables, findspot, etc.; 'sub-group' then being an extension of 'n' objects by argument—style, association, circumstance—across typology and themes, identifying salient characteristics or traits; and finally, 'group' would represent an extension of stylistic attributes and assessments of circumstances possible across time and space, with the recognition that degrees of circumstantial evidence increases as degrees of strength of argument decreases.

Of course, there will always be the anomalies—works that defy classification (e.g., Herrmann 1986: no. 322, pl. 73). They stand as a caution that we are dealing with an imperfect, incomplete archaeological and historical record, coupled with an imperfect analytical schema in a constant state of development. Knowing that there are perpetual oscillations in scholarly disciplines between a focus upon epistemology and data on the one hand, and the interrogation of theoretical/interpretive frameworks on the other, it is important to keep in mind that our models *and* our data shift constantly beneath our feet. In some sense, it is the epistemological work that endures—scholars will continue to use Herrmann's catalogues of the Nimrud ivories long after they cease weighing either of our interpretive studies! Yet, it is also important to leave time and space for self-conscious pauses to consider the interpretive framework. It is less a question of virtue being attached to *either* empirical work *or* theoretical frame, than it is of the need for *both* the one *and* the other; for with increased rigor and consciousness of the consequences of our interpretive strategies, we lay the foundations for the next spurt of empirical work.

For the present, I would be satisfied if we could work on establishing scaled categories, that is, seeking a kind of diagnostic hierarchy of criteria attached to properties that can be measured (see Cowgill 1972; Adams & Adams 1991: 202–213). I would also strongly endorse the introduction of more self-conscious methodological crosschecks, such that groupings by one sort of type-marker, such as 'style,' could then be looked at in terms of how the resultant groups would fit with groups determined by 'motif' and/or 'material/technology' and 'distribution.' For it is clear that groupings—at whatever level—are never given, but rather are always the result of interpretation, with some requiring more interpretation (or more imagination/fancy footwork) than others. And if the resultant clusters are to stand—if the criteria used for discrimination are adequate such that boundaries separate consistently and convincingly both internal members and external exclusions—then it seems we *must* make both the articulation of criteria and their weighting a necessary part of the analysis.[7]

---

[7] It will be remembered that in the methodological debates of the 1960s and 70s (see p. 30, above), it was frequently argued that only assemblages large enough to permit quantitative analysis could hope to yield scientifically rigorous results. It has since been countered that qualitative approaches can similarly be subjected to rigorous methodological standards and tested for adequacy to theoretical and interpretive

To date, at least as far as luxury goods of the early first millennium
B.C.E. are concerned, we have been relatively successful in isolating
the broad, regional groups using both stylistic and technical criteria.
In assigning them to respective regions, I do not see how we can avoid
using geographical terms, but would suggest that we emphasize we are
using ambiguous identifiers, like 'Phoenician,' in their geographical
and not ethnic or political sense. The task before us now is to move
toward discriminating subsets like locale, workshop and hand (as is also
called for in the paper of Georgina Herrmann, this volume). But if our
'explanations' are to reflect the complexity of production in antiquity,
and if we wish to determine the social coordinates of the craftsmen and
merchants who were responsible for their production and distribution,
as well as the end-users in any reconstruction of cultural contact, then
it is incumbent on us to work actively toward reducing error stemming
from methodological flaws. Only then can we hope to argue convinc-
ingly that a particular grouping represents the range of one individual
hand over time and not two people seated next to one another in the
same local workshop, or two adjacent workshops in the same locality,
or two proximate but distinct localities within a broader cultural region,
and so move on to assessments of contact across cultural boundaries.

---

frameworks. The optimistic view is that there exist possibilities for refining both method
and interpretive theory in the practice of qualitative analysis—toward methods explic-
itly designed to explore empirical problems and adequate to the theoretical apparatus
they are asked to serve.

Bibliography

Adams, W. Y. & Adams, E. W., 1991, *Archaeological typology and practical reality: A dialectical approach to artifact classification and sorting*, Cambridge.

Ashmolean Museum, 1967, *A Select Exhibition of Sir John and Lady Beazley's Gifts, 1912–1966.* Exhibition Catalogue, Oxford.

Barnett, R. D., 1957, ²1975, *A Catalogue of the Nimrud Ivories. With other examples of Ancient Near Eastern Ivories in the British Museum*, London.

Beazley, J. D., 1922, Citharoedus, *JHS* 42, 70–98.

——, 1927, The Antimenes Painter, *JHS* 47, 63–92.

——, 1951, *The Development of Attic Black-Figure* (Sather Classical Lectures 24), Berkeley & Los Angeles.

Boardman, J., 1988, *Athenian Black Figure Vases*, London.

——, 2000, Images and media in the Greek world, in: Uehlinger, ed., 2000, 323–337.

Braun-Holzinger, E. A. & Matthäus, H., 2000, Schutzgenien in Mesopotamien und in den angrenzenden Gebieten: ihre Übernahme in Zypern, Kreta und Griechenland, in: Uehlinger, ed., 2000, 283–321.

Brommer, F., 1967, *Die Metopen des Parthenon, Katalog und Untersuchung*, Mainz.

Cohen, B., 1978, *Attic Bilingual Vases and their Painters*, New York.

Cowgill, G., 1970, Some Sampling and Reliability Problems in Archaeology, in: *Archéologie et calculateurs: Problèmes sémiologiques et mathématiques*, Paris, 161–175.

——, 1972, Models, methods and techniques for seriation, in: D. L. Clarke, ed., *Models in Archaeology*, London, 381–424.

Davis, W., 1990, Style and History in Art History, in: M. Conkey & C. A. Hastorf, ed., *The Uses of Style in Archaeology*; Cambridge, 18–31.

Desroches-Noblecourt, C., 1956, Materiaux pour l'étude des relations entre Ugarit et l'Egypte: Interprétation et datation d'une scène gravée sur deux fragments en albâtre provenant des fouilles du palais d'Ugarit, in: C. F. A. Schaeffer, ed., *Ugaritica* III, Paris, 179–220.

Feldman, M., 2002, Luxurious Forms: Redefining a Mediterranean 'International Style,' 1400–1200 B.C.E., *ArtB* 84, 6–29.

Flood, F. B., 2001, Ghūrid Architecture in the Indus Valley: The Tomb of Shaykh Sādam Shahīd, *ArsOr* 31, 129–166.

Gubel, E., 2000a, Multicultural and multimedial aspects of early Phoenician Art, c. 1200–675 B.C.E., in: Uehlinger, ed., 2000, 185–214.

——, 2000b, Das libyerzeitliche Ägypten und die Anfänge der phönizischen Ikonographie, in: M. Görg & G. Hölbl, eds., *Ägypten und der östliche Mittelmeerraum im 1. Jahrtausend v. Chr. Akten des Interdisziplinären Symposions am Institut für Ägyptologie der Universität München 25.–27.10.1996* (ÄAT 44), Wiesbaden, 69–100.

Hawkins, J. D., 2000, *Corpus of Hieroglyphic Luwian Inscriptions. I. Inscriptions of the Iron Age*, Berlin & New York.

Herrmann, G., 1986, *Ivories from Room SW37, Fort Shalmaneser* (Ivories from Nimrud IV), London.

——, 1989, The Nimrud Ivories, 1: The Flame and Frond School, *Iraq* 51, 85–109.

——, 1992, *The Small Collections from Fort Shalmaneser* (Ivories from Nimrud V), London.

——, 2000, Ivory carving of first millennium workshops, traditions and diffusion, in: Uehlinger, ed., 2000, 267–282.

Hill, J. N. & Evans, R. K., 1972, A model for classification and typology, in: D. L. Clarke, ed., *Models in Archaeology*, London, 231–273.

Hoffman, G. L., 1997, *Imports and Immigrants: Near Eastern Contacts with Iron Age Crete*, Ann Arbor.

Hunt, R. C., n.d., *Apples and Oranges: Toward Comparability in the Social Sciences.* Unpublished ms.

Kantor, H. J., 1947, The Shoulder Ornament of Near Eastern Lions, *JNES* 6, 250–274.

——, 1956, Syro-Palestinian Ivories, *JNES* 15, 153–174.

——, 1960, Ivory Carving in the Mycenaean Period, *Archaeology* 13, 14–25.

Lakoff, G., 1987, *Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things: What Categories Reveal about the Mind*, Chicago & London.

Laroche, E., 1958, Etudes sur les hiéroglyphiques hittites, 7: Une signature d'artistes à Karatepe, *Syria* 35, 275–283.

Lilyquist, C., 1998, The Use of Ivories as Interpreters of Political History, *BASOR* 310, 25–33.

von Luschan, F., 1943, *Die Kleinfunde von Sendschirli. Ausgrabungen in Sendschirli* V (MOS 15), Berlin.

Mallowan, M. E. L., 1963, The 'Mona Lisa' of Nimrud, *Iraq* 25, 1–5.

Mallowan M. E. L. & Herrmann, G., 1974, *Furniture from SW7, Fort Shalmaneser* (Ivories from Nimrud III), London.

Morelli, B. (Ivan Lermolieff), 1892, *Italian Painters. Critical Studies of their Works. The Borghese and Doria Galleries in Rome.* Transl. C. J. Ffoulkes, London.

Neer, R., 1997, Beazley and the Language of Connoisseurship, *Hephaistos* 15, 7–30.

Niwiński, A., 2000, Iconography of the 21st dynasty: its main features, levels of attestation, the media and their diffusion, in: Uehlinger, ed., 2000, 21–44.

Roaf, M., 1983, *Sculptures and Sculptors at Persepolis* (Iran 21), London.

Sasson, J., 1990, Artisans...Artists: Documentary Perspectives from Mari, in: A. C. Gunter, ed., *Investigating Artistic Environments in the Ancient Near East*, Washington DC, 21–28.

Sauerlander, W., 1983, From Stilus to Style: Reflections on the Fate of a Notion, *ArtH* 6, 253–270.

Schaeffer, C. F. A., 1954, Les fouilles de Ras-Shamra-Ugarit. Quinzième, seizième et dix-septième campagnes (1951, 1952 & 1953), *Syria* 31, 14–67.

Suter, C. E., 1992, Die Frau am Fenster in der orientalischen Elfenbein-Schnitzkunst des frühen 1. Jahrtausends v. Chr, *JSKBW* 29, 7–28.

Uehlinger, C., ed., 2000, *Images as Media, Sources for the cultural history of the Near East and the Eastern Mediterranean (1st millennium B.C.E.)* (OBO 175), Fribourg & Göttingen.

Wicke, D., 1999, Altorientalische Pferdescheuklappen, *UF* 31, 803–852.

Winter, I. J., 1976, Carved Ivory Furniture Panels from Nimrud: A Coherent Subgroup of the North Syrian Style, *MMJ* 11, 25–54.

——, 1988, North Syria as a bronze-working centre in the early first millennium B.C.: Luxury commodities at home and abroad, in: J. E. Curtis, ed., *Bronze-Working Centres of Western Asia*, London & New York, 193–225.

——, 1989, North Syrian Ivories and Tell Halaf Reliefs: The Impact of Luxury Goods upon 'Major' Arts, in: A. Leonard, Jr. & B. Beyer Williams, eds., *Essays in Ancient Civilization Presented to Helene J. Kantor* (SAOC 47), Chicago, 321–332.

——, 1992, Review of G. Herrmann, Ivories from Room SW37 Fort Shalmaneser (Ivories from Nimrud IV), 1986, *JNES* 51, 135–141.

——, 1998, Review of G. Herrmann, The Small Collections from Fort Shalmaneser (Ivories from Nimrud V), 1992, *JNES* 57, 150–153.

——, 2000, Thera Painting in the Light of the Ancient Near East: Questions of Methodology and Interpretation, in: S. Sherratt, ed., *The Wall Paintings of Thera: Proceedings of the First International Colloquium*, Vol. 2, Athens, 745–762.
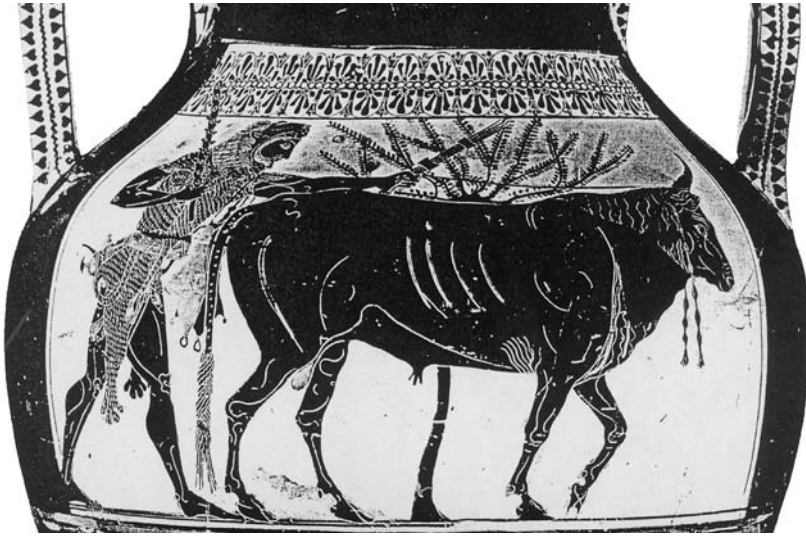
Figure 1. Herakles and the Cretan Bull on black-figure side of bilingual amphora, attributed to the Lysippides Painter, ca. 525–520 B.C.E. [courtesy of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Henry Lillie Pierce Fund, 99.538].

Figure 2. Herakles and the Cretan Bull on red-figure side of bilingual amphora, attributed to the Andokides Painter, ca. 525–520 B.C.E. [courtesy of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Henry Lillie Pierce Fund, 99.538].

Figure 3. Ivory pyxis from Burnt Palace at Nimrud. Ht. 8.5 cm
[courtesy of the British Museum, London, WAA 118173].

Figure 4. Ivory pyxis fragment from Burnt Palace at Nimrud. Ht. 6 cm
[courtesy of the British Museum, London, WAA 118174].

Figure 5. Ivory chair-back panel from Room SW7 of Fort Shalmaneser at Nimrud. Ht. 21.2 cm [courtesy of the Iraq Museum, Baghdad, ND 7918].

Figure 6. Ivory chair-back plaque from Room SW7 of Fort Shalmaneser at Nimrud. Ht. as preserved, 15.7 cm [courtesy of the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, 1959.206].

Figure 7. Ivory chair-back plaque from Room SW7 of Fort Shalmaneser at Nimrud. Ht. 24.8 cm [courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 59.107.4].

Figure 8. Ivory female figure on fan handle from Burnt Palace at Nimrud. Ht. 13 cm [courtesy of the British Museum, London, WAA 118197+118255].

Figure 9. Ivory female head, said to be from Sherif Khan, but possibly from Nimrud. Ht. 4.2 cm [courtesy of the British Museum, London, WAA 118228].

INTERACTIONS OF TIME AND SPACE

PERSPECTIVE ON THE "LOCAL STYLE" OF HASANLU IVB: A STUDY IN RECEPTIVITY

In 1960, Robert H. Dyson, Jr. published a composite-paste cylinder seal found in level IVB at Hasanlu in Northwest Iran, and noted that "the rampant lion and bull (on the seal) recall similar figures on the silver cup" found at the site in 1958.[1] Subsequently, Edith Porada enumerated the qualities shared by the well-known gold bowl from Hasanlu and the silver cup.[2] In reference to the seal published by Dyson, she suggested that it probably represented a local style which would also include a decorated vase fragment of the same paste composition.[3]

With the discovery of the large quantity of ivory fragments in Burned Building II at Hasanlu during the 1964 season, Oscar White Muscarella observed that: "Many of the ivories appear to be the products of local craftsmen, since stylistic details are seen to be similar to those of other objects considered to be made locally, and because no immediate parallels are forthcoming from foreign centers."[4]

The notion of a "local style" at Hasanlu has since become enshrined in the literature. It is the purpose of the present article to examine (and to support) the validity of such a claim, and to attempt to view those qualities which characterize the Hasanlu local style in the perspective of the particular historical situation which pertained in Northwest Iran during the 9th century B.C. To pursue this topic in the context of the present volume is especially satisfying, as the issues involved include aspects of culture history and process so much of interest to the Director of the Hasanlu Project, while at the same time, his initial observation

---

[1] 1960:28.
[2] 1969:123, first published in 1965; 1967:2971–77.
[3] 1969:125.
[4] 1966:127.

on the seal and the silver cup reflects a sensitivity to visual material relevant to the art historian.[5]

* * *

Although style has been defined in a variety of ways,[6] common to all is a sense of shared characteristics of form and sometimes of content in a number of works, such that the group would constitute a recognizable typological unit distinct from other units. As with a ceramic typology, individual properties of a style, such as form, subject matter, idiosyncratic details, composition and spatial distribution, technique and material will be found to co-vary significantly, although not always in equal measure or in every category. Higher value is naturally placed on visual properties than on technique or material.

A stylistic group, consisting of decorated artifacts or art works, is often treated differently from a ceramic typology, in that members are not likely to occur in sufficiently large numbers to allow for quantification. One is generally therefore thrown back upon a qualitative evaluation of the works. Nevertheless, there is currently an attempt being made by art historians and anthropologists alike to further refine and organize descriptive categories in order to reach greater precision in the formation of stylistic groups, and even, despite the problem of sample, to reduce categories to quantifiable entities.[7] While no attempt at quantification will be made here, it must be emphasized that essential to any adequate definition of a "style" is that characteristics are measurable, not mystical, properties of the works.

The assumption that any group so defined represents a "local" style—i.e., is a product of the same locale in which it is found, as opposed to an "international" style which crosses geographical and cultural borders—is based upon the following premises: 1) a relatively limited spatial distribution of the group; 2) a reasonable explanation for occurrences outside of the primary region; and 3) a recognition that the choices which result in a "style" are a reflection of cultural

---

[5] My interest in the "local style" at Hasanlu grew out of a study of the copper/bronze horse's breastplate (HAS.74–241) found at the site in 1974. I am very grateful to Dr. Dyson for his initial suggestion to work on the breastplate, as well as for his permission to pursue research on the local style once the breastplate was done. I trust he now understands why I was so vague about where the eventual "local style" manuscript was to go.

[6] Schapiro, 1953:287; Kroeber, 1957:26; Mills, 1957:7; Redfield, 1959:28.

[7] E.g., Borillo, 1974.

attitudes, conscious or unconscious, operating in the artist or crafts-man (for which, see below). So that, when a significant number of objects of different media and/or by different hands from a single place manifest similar characteristics of style, it may be suggested that the shared qualities are "at home" in the local culture, unless it can be demonstrated otherwise.[8]

Both Porada[9] and Muscarella[10] have described the attributes which mark the Hasanlu "local style." It is basically linear, with a dependence upon outline and surface decoration, rather than on mass and volume. Individual aspects may best be seen in representations of human figures, in animals such as lions, and in combat motifs that include chariots, horses and siege elements. The silver beaker with decoration in electrum appliqué, now in Tehran (HAS.58–427, fig. 1a and drawing, fig. 1b), shows the greatest range of elements of the local style; however indi-vidual elements are equally recognizable on a variety of objects found at the site, ranging from lion pins and plaques to cylinder seals.

Human figures are characterized by straight or braided hair, usually bound by a fillet, low receding foreheads, circular eyes, very prominent noses, pursed lips and tapering beards (cf. figs. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5). They are generally barefoot, although sometimes wear thick sandals with curving tips, and garments may either be short, patterned tunics or long, straight dresses with a fringe at the bottom. Heads are large in proportion to body size, figures tend to lean slightly forward, and arms and legs are often awkwardly articulated.

The same tendency toward decorative patterning of garments in human figures may be seen on the bodies of animals, where backs can be marked by bands of pendant concentric half-circles, herringbone strips or simple vertical lines. Shoulders are offset as separate segments, and joints are emphasized by series of parallel lines (cf. figs. 1a, b and 7).

Lions are among the most frequently represented animals. They are consistently shown with open mouths and prominent teeth (figs. 1a & b, 2, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10). Porada has associated the stylization of the bronze lion finials on iron pins (e.g., fig. 8) with the representation

---

[8] External arguments can also be brought to bear on the discussion, such as the link to other artifact groups known to be of local manufacture—for example, actual objects both found in the region and also depicted on works in the "local style."

[9] 1959, 1967, 1969, 1974.

[10] 1966, 1971 and forthcoming.

of the same animal on the silver beaker (fig. 1b), citing the similar
thin ruff, tufts of hair on the mane and pattern of lines on legs and
body.[11] In his unpublished manuscript of the catalogue of the Hasanlu
ivories, Muscarella further notes the hatched or rope-pattern outline
on the backs of lion pins, which is directly comparable to a number of
ivories (e.g., fig. 9), thus "reinforcing the conclusion that it was a local
characteristic."[12] The same angular thrust of muzzle, gaping mouth
and large paws of several lions executed in relief on ivory plaques
and in the round on bronze pins can also be observed on the gold
foil strip forming the headdress of an ivory head (HAS.64–933, fig. 6)
and on an iron plaque (HAS.62–1060). These characteristics are also
seen on cylinder seals in frit and clay (e.g., HAS.59–742, fig. 10, and
HAS.62–841), and on clay jar sealings containing impressions of seals
of the same type (HAS.60–478, fig. 2, and HAS.58–498, HAS.60–944,
HAS.62–622).

Finally, battle or hunt scenes with chariots and horses include people
and animals executed in the "local style" and reflect other consistent
characteristics which contribute to a definition of the style. For example,
chariot horses are generally indicated to be stallions. While they have
their legs extended to suggest movement, all four feet are usually placed
on the ground, as on several ivory fragments, on the silver beaker and
on a silver plaque from Burned Building III (HAS.64–757, fig. 11;
HAS.58–427, fig. 1a; and HAS.64–475). The form of the chariot is basi-
cally the same on the ivories, on bronze and iron plaques (HAS.62–1055
and –1059), on the silver beaker, and on seals (e.g., HAS.62–841). They
have narrow cabs with five- or six-spoked wheels, and show similar
means of harnessing the horses by a central yoke-pole.

In terms of space and the interaction of figures, it will be noted that
figures exist in relatively isolated space. There is little overlapping; there
is a syntax of gestures through which we read "action," but little of

---

[11] 1961:123.

[12] In press: ms. p. 55. I am grateful to Dr. Muscarella for the opportunity to read
his manuscript prior to publication. Many of the parallels I had noted between objects
of different media from Hasanlu have also been cited by him in relation to the ivories.
Much of this is due to the generosity of Robert Dyson in opening up the registry files
of Hasanlu objects to both of us; it is also due in large measure to the close working
relationship we have all enjoyed in dealing with this material, which has been one of
the most satisfying aspects of my association with the Hasanlu project. References
to any hitherto unpublished ivory fragments are made through the courtesy of Dr.
Muscarella.

what we might call an attempt at visual realism in movement; and there is a general lack of subsidiary fill or landscape elements to provide a context for the figures depicted. Action therefore seems to take place in "ideal" rather than "real" space.

One could go on to establish further links between objects in the formulation of the "local style" at Hasanlu,[13] however the main point may be stated: that while not all of the work in this style at Hasanlu is by the same hand—indicated by variations in the proportions of figures, rendering of hair, etc.—all share iconographic elements and details which make of them a coherent group.[14] The pervading presence of so many objects done in a homogeneous style, yet with differences in material and execution, strongly suggests that the works are native to their place of discovery. That some production was going on at the site is evident from the excavation of what was apparently a metal-working installation, uncovered in a brief sounding on the north face of the citadel mound in 1959.[15] The presence of clay jar sealings in the same style as the seals and other objects also argues for common local production and usage of these seals. And, within the limits of negative evidence, a local origin for the style may be suggested by the fact that Hasanlu is at present the only center in Northwest Iran at which the style has been isolated.

*   *   *

At the same time, a number of objects have been found at Hasanlu which are clearly identifiable as the products of other areas. The major points of reference seem to be either to North Syria or to Assyria in the west. Actual North Syrian goods from Hasanlu include ivory fragments and lion bowls.[16] Assyrian goods seem to predominate, including ivories, frit objects and linear-style cylinder seals (HAS.72–112; HAS.46–606 and –607; HAS.60–13, –108, –902, –1016, –1021, –1022, –1023).

---

[13] E.g., the copper plaque, HAS.62–1123, showing two winged horses opposite a tree, so close to the winged horse on an iron disk, HAS.60–876.

[14] Emphasis in the present study is on similarities in order to establish the broad characteristics which constitute the group. One could also sub-divide this group through closer analysis of idiosyncracies in theme and detail, to argue for different workshops or individual hands that participated in the larger stylistic complex. This would require the presentation of a fuller corpus of materials, and will be pursued by Muscarella in the context of his catalogue of all of the Hasanlu ivories.

[15] Dyson, 1966:423.

[16] Cf. distribution maps and references to all published pieces through 1973 in Winter, 1973:21, 25, 384–86, and 400–01.

The presence of these objects is of interest on a number of levels. They suggest by their simple presence that, whether directly or via a series of intermediaries, there was some order of material exchange between Hasanlu and the west.[17] Corroborating evidence for Assyrian contact with Northwest Iran at this time exists as well from literary sources (cf. below). Parallel records do not exist for North Syria, although it is not impossible that the area maintained independent ties with Iran. Nevertheless, it must be remembered that Assyrian objects far outnumber North Syrian works excavated at Hasanlu, and furthermore, that virtually all of the North Syrian works found at the site occur also at the 9th century Assyrian capital of Nimrud.[18] Thus, the Assyrians could well have served as the agents by which North Syrian goods were redistributed to the east.[19]

The nature of this contact between Hasanlu and the west becomes particularly significant when one looks to determine the origins of and the sources for the "local style" at Hasanlu. In individual elements, such as the rendering of human figures, Porada has noted that the silver beaker and the rest of the objects cited share qualities of physiognomy and apparel with the gold bowl found at Hasanlu, although she suggests that the latter predates the other works by from one to three hundred years. What distinguishes the later works, according to Porada, is the introduction of "Assyrian prototypes."[20] Muscarella, too, notes the extensive debt owed to Assyrian, as well as North Syrian, reliefs in the themes depicted on ivories and metal-work of local style.[21]

---

[17] See Renfrew, 1974 for alternate models for the mechanics of this exchange.

[18] Compare, for example, the ivory fragment in North Syrian style from Hasanlu—Muscarella, 1966: fig. 6—with the North Syrian ivory pyxis from Nimrud—Barnett, 1957: S.13.

[19] As Dyson, 1965:199 and Young, 1966:61. This is also logical in the context of Renfrew's analysis (1975:29) in which he suggests that redistribution is a more efficient mode of exchange than reciprocity where each participant has to maintain independent ties with every other participant. Furthermore, it is also likely that the raw tusks used for the local style ivories would have been obtained from the West, along with finished goods in the same material. This was an established tradition during the 9th century B.C., documented in the tribute lists of both Assurnasirpal II and Shalmaneser III, where North Syrian states as well as Babylonia provided the kings with tusks in addition to ivory furniture (cf. Luckenbill, 1926:476, 625, 650, 585, 593; and King, 1915: pls. XXVIII, XXXIII).

[20] Porada, 1969:122. See also, Porada, 1967:2974–77 for a detailed account of the relationship of the silver beaker to Assyrian art.

[21] Muscarella, 1966:129, and In Press, ms. pp. 107ff.

Those elements in the Hasanlu local style most closely related to Assyrian representations have to do primarily with battle scenes. The silver beaker, a number of copper/bronze and iron plaques, and the ivories afford excellent examples of the closeness to Assyrian works. Chariots and horses are shown similarly, with two horses and two riders in the cab (figs. 1a, 11, 12 and 13). The six-spoked wheels of the chariot and the occasional pairs of crossed quivers hanging at the side of the cab can be exactly paralleled on palace reliefs of Assurnasirpal II (883–859 B.C.) from Nimrud (e.g., figs. 1a and 13), or from the Balawat Gates of both Assurnasirpal and his son, Shalmaneser III (858–824 B.C.).[22] Similar yoke poles with protome animal heads are seen on the silver beaker and on Assyrian reliefs,[23] and the enemy who falls between the legs of the horses is typical of local style ivories as well as of Assyrian representations in relief (cf. figs. 11 and 13).[24] Pairs of bowmen seen on local style ivories can likewise be found on reliefs from Nimrud (figs. 14 and 15),[25] and Muscarella has documented the connections between a local style ivory fragment showing a woman with upraised arms before a tower and mourning women before battlements in Assyrian siege scenes.[26] Similar battlements with warriors are depicted on some of the local style metal plaques that must represent excerpts of such siege scenes (compare HAS.62–1056, fig. 16, with the relief of Assurnasirpal II, fig. 15).

Other themes which find counterparts in Assyria include scenes with seated figures, processions and lion hunts.[27] The lion hunts in particular occur on large scale reliefs from Nimrud, on incised decoration of

---

[22] Layard, 1849: pl. 10; Barnett, 1973: figs. 1–3; King, 1915: passim.

[23] Layard, 1849: pls. 10, 13, 48: 4; Mallowan and Davies, 1970: No. 62.

[24] Layard, 1849: pl. 27. Muscarella has suggested that the awkward posture of the horses, with their four feet on the ground, brings the Hasanlu representations closer to reliefs from North Syria (i.e., Carchemish) than to the Assyrian reliefs (1966: 129). The Carchemish reliefs were certainly standing throughout the 9th century B.C.; however their awkwardness could be a function of a regional style quite independent of the similar occurrence at Hasanlu. I feel this is a question we must leave open at the moment. Until there is more evidence of direct North Syrian-Iranian contact in the 9th century, what is of over-riding importance is that, whether Carchemish or Nimrud provided the immediate model, representations of victory in battle, part of the public iconography of the west, were adapted by the population of Hasanlu.

[25] Layard, 1849: pl. 27.

[26] Muscarella, 1966: 129, figs. 6 and 7.

[27] Muscarella, In Press: ms. p. 124.

garments from the same reliefs, and on the bronze doors of Assurna-
sirpal II from Balawat.[28]

Despite the large number of Assyrian objects found at the site of
Hasanlu thus far, there is none which directly provides a model for
the scenes found in local style works. Assyrian cylinder seals showing
bowmen do occur, and the belted and fringed garments they wear may
provide the prototype for similar apparel on the local style ivories;[29]
however the figures are generally shown kneeling, and are depicted in
single combat, usually with mythological animals, rather than at war
(e.g., HAS.60–13, fig. 17, and HAS.60–902 and –1021, as opposed to
the local style plaque, HAS.62–1054, fig. 15). The Assyrian style ivories
found at Hasanlu contain figures of genii or courtiers; again, not hunt
or military scenes (e.g., HAS.72–112).

There are a few fragments of 9th century ivories in Assyrian style
found in the throne room of the Nabu Temple at Nimrud which do con-
tain representations of citadels with battlements or chariot scenes (e.g.,
fig. 18),[30] thus allowing for the possibility that similar subjects could also
have been on imported pieces at Hasanlu not recovered in excavation.
However, on the whole, the clear ties of scenes relating to Assyrian art
in the local style of Hasanlu are not to works of comparable scale, but
rather to the palace reliefs of Assurnasirpal and the bronze doors from
Balawat. The presence of glazed terracotta wall tiles in Burned Building
II and elsewhere at Hasanlu (e.g., HAS.58–362a-g, HAS.59–773 and
–819, HAS.60–303 and –513 HAS.62–163 and –446 and HAS.70–360,
fig. 19), which are clearly modeled after similar tiles known from the
9th century Assyrian palaces at Assur and Nimrud,[31] is a further and
equally significant link to Assyrian monumental architecture.[32]

---

[28] Layard, 1849: pls. 10, 48; Barnett, 1973.
[29] Dyson, 1964:8, in re figs. 12 and 14.
[30] Mallowan and Davies, 1970:55, 62–66.
[31] Cf. Dyson, 1958:12, 14, compared to Andrae, 1925: passim and Layard, 1849: pl.
84. The black and white chevron decoration on the borders and general shape closely
parallel actual Assyrian works, yet colors and the juxtaposition of motifs do not exactly
duplicate the Assyrian. Evidence for viewing the Hasanlu tiles as local, assyrianizing
products will be more fully presented by Suzanne Heim in her dissertation, "Glazed-ware
Industry of Pre-Achaemenid Iran," in preparation for the Institute of Fine Arts, New
York University. I am very grateful for her permission to refer to the study here.
[32] Dyson (1976) has documented the sequence of construction at Hasanlu in Period
IV, which shows the progressive addition and eventual incorporation of porticos into
the facades of the larger buildings on the citadel. This may be seen as yet another
major statement of the desire for increased monumentality during the period,
much along the same lines as the Assyrian kings who incorporated North-Syrian

In other words, although the Assyrianizing elements that mark the Hasanlu local style undergo a transfer in context from major to minor scale, reference is consistently to Assyrian public monuments and royal iconography, and this focus is reinforced by the use of decorated wall tiles imitating the elite buildings of the West.

Nevertheless, the Hasanlu representations are not literal copies of the Assyrian. Selection operates in the omission of many details, such as landscape elements—emphasized in Assyrian works to "set the scene" for specific battle sites, e.g., fruit trees in the fertile Orontes Valley before the citadel of Hamath, or the Euphrates depicted at Carchemish, as illustrated on the Balawat Gates. In fact, the Hasanlu representations seem in general to be rather synoptic versions of the Assyrian themes. It is difficult to tell from the ivories, all found in very fragmentary condition, just how complete the original panels may have been, but certainly the metal plaques *are* complete and show quite abbreviated vignettes of the more extensive narrative scenes known from Assyrian contexts. This the Assyrians do also at times, for example, as details on decorated garments indicated by incision on the reliefs;[33] however while the Assyrian artists always had reference back to the more complete and explicit representations of the reliefs, thus far there is no evidence for architectural sculpture or extensive panels in metalwork preserved either at Hasanlu or at any other known site in Northwest Iran.

* * *

Certain questions immediately arise, such as how the craftsmen at Hasanlu assimilated the Assyrian elements which appear in their work. We know that there was Assyrian military activity in the Zagros during the early 9th century, and certainly by 843 B.C. with the campaigns of Shalmaneser III.[34] And Assurnasirpal II represents himself in combat with what may be Zamuans from the northwest Zagros region not far distant from the area of Hasanlu.[35] Did members of the Hasanlu population see Assyrians in Iran and copy their chariots, etc. in art?

type porticos (or *būt-hilānis*) into their palaces as statements of class and opulence (cf. Luckenbill, 1926: 804, for example). However, there is not sufficient similarity between the Hasanlu facades and Assyrian or North Syrian palace architecture of the 9th century to suggest that the residents of Hasanlu were specifically imitating western models.

[33] Canby, 1971: pls. X–XIX.
[34] Luckenbill, 1926:448, 458, 637; Levine, 1973:21.
[35] Barnett, 1967: fig. 1055.

Was there direct discourse with Assyrians or other outsiders, so that individuals heard descriptions of the Assyrian palaces and images of splendor?[35a] Was there even direct discourse between Assyrian artists and their counterparts in Hasanlu?[36] Could individuals from Hasanlu have been in Assyria themselves and had first hand experience of the palaces (since we know that Assurnasirpal sent laborers from Zamua to Nimrud as early as 880 B.C.)?[37]

One further wonders through what process of interaction Assyrian goods were arriving in Hasanlu. Did they arrive as payment for other goods or services, as diplomatic gift-giving, or to affirm treaties? If by trade, what modes of exchange were operative,[38] and at what level(s) of society?[39]

[35a] N. Na'aman has called my attention to the reference by Assurnasirpal II of his renovation of a city in Zamua called Atlila, of his renaming it Dur-Assur, and of the settlement therein of Assyrians (Grayson, 1976: § 566). Na'aman notes this as a pattern in Assyrian activity of the period, e.g. at Aribua, between Patina and Luḫuti in Syria (ibid.: § 585), and suggests that since both cities are well outside the orbit of Assyrian political control at this time, the only explanation for such installations could be concerning trade. For our purposes, this reference to the presence of Assyrians in Zamua provides both the opportunity for direct interaction with individuals from the Zagros and the possible means by which goods from Assyria were actually distributed in the region (cf. below, p. 152).

[36] That Assyrian artists accompanied the army on foreign expeditions during the 9th century B.C. is clear from the representation on the Balawat Gates of Shalmaneser III where sculptors execute a stela of the king at the source of the Tigris (King, 1915: pl. LIX). Such individuals would also have been responsible for similar representations on the newly discovered rock reliefs in Cilicia ('Taşyürek. 1975: fig. 3 and pp. 169–72) and on the upper Euphrates (found Summer, 1976, north of Birecik; unpublished). Madhloom (1970:121–22) has suggested that this practice increased during the reigns of later Assyrian kings, but certainly also in the 9th century first-hand observations had to have been recorded in order to produce the accurate and detailed representations of local terrain and citadels indicated in battle reliefs and on the Balawat Gates.

[37] Luckenbill, 1926:451, 484, 489. For a discussion of the complicated issues involved in the location of Zamua relative to Hasanlu, the ancient name of which remains unknown, cf. Levine, 1973:19–22. Certainly at other times in history, not only laborers but also artists from the provinces tended to collect in the major cities—e.g., at the time of the Republic, when artists from Greece and South Italy are known to have moved for a while to Rome (cf. Brendel, 1953:46).

[38] Cf. Renfrew, 1975:41–43.

[39] Assurnasirpal II states that he gets horses, silver and gold as tribute from the east (Luckenbill, 1926: 441). Thus, Dyson (1965: 203) reconstructs the history of Hasanlu with a reference to the importance of these horses to the Assyrians. In the absence of Assyrian documents dealing with trade, it has been suggested that mention in the royal annals of tribute commodities are but a euphemism for trade in the period. In any event, Flannery has noted that military activity and commercial interaction are not necessarily mutually exclusive—one can be at war with someone one day and

A hint that we are dealing at least in part with very high level exchange is suggested by the 1974 discovery in Burned Building V of half of an inscribed macehead that reads, "Palace of Assur-Uballit," king of Assyria from 1365–1330 B.C.[40]—i.e., coming from royal stores. We further know that when Assurnasirpal II dedicated his new capital at Nimrud in 878 B.C., he boasted of inviting some 50,000 foreign guests to the festivities, including officials from territories in the Zagros,[41] in addition to the Zamuans already in Nimrud as forced labor.

Thus it is clear that opportunities abounded for interaction between Assyria and Hasanlu during the 9th century B.C. The term "interaction" is used advisedly, in the absence of more precise data about the nature of that activity. The relevant concept is Joseph Caldwell's "Interaction Sphere"—that network of relationships within which diverse cultures engage in the material exchange of finished goods, stylistic concepts and raw materials.[42] The concept brings with it the implicit awareness that all material exchange is at the same time a form of social exchange; "all interactions imply information flow."[43]

In the present case, the archaeological facts which document that interaction at Hasanlu include both the presence of Assyrian objects imported into the site and the absorption of assyrianizing elements into objects of "local style" made at the site. What these facts may mean in terms of the culture history of Hasanlu will be the concern of the second half of this study.

In the current scholarly awareness of "the growing interconnectedness of things,"[44] many art-historical studies have documented the effect of one artistic tradition upon another—for example, between the Byzantine and Islamic worlds, from the Roman Empire to her provinces, and

engaged in trade the next, with the transfer of commodities essentially the same for both booty and exchange (1972:130).

[40] Dyson and Pigott, 1975:161. The assumption that the Aššur-Uballit macehead must needs be an heirloom from the period of Hasanlu V because of the dates of the Assyrian king is, I feel, not warranted. It is certainly a possibility. But it is also possible that the macehead represents an object of earlier date sent from Assyrian palace stores to Iran in the 9th century B.C.—as is often the case in more recent history, where out-of-date or obsolete goods are distributed to subordinate cultures as valuables, but in reality are of much more value to the less-sophisticated receivers than to the givers.

[41] Wiseman, 1952:29, and 32 line 147; Grayson, 1976: § 682.

[42] Cf. Flannery, 1972:131.

[43] Renfrew, 1975:33.

[44] Adams, 1976:19.

from the court art of France and Italy to the lesser European capitals during the Renaissance, to cite but a few.[45] The process includes a wide range of adaptations: at one extreme, the transfer of motifs or elements without any understanding, or the conscious rejection and complete remodelling of original meanings; at the other extreme, the acceptance of a visual theme along with its contextual significance and the integration of it into the fabric of the embracing culture. On some occasions, this last will be done with a specific desire to identify with the original culture or meaning of the motif. At such times, the word "emulation" most appropriately describes the process of absorption; and I would suggest that such a principle gives meaningful structure to the observed phenomena at Hasanlu.

The underlying concept was partially anticipated by Levine, when he observed that, "The finds at Hasanlu show a strong Assyrian influence in the material culture. The meaning of this cultural influence in political terms is unclear. Assyria, as the greatest and most prestigious power of the time, would have been looked to for art styles by surrounding peoples. Thus, the presence of Assyrian and assyrianizing elements at Hasanlu does not necessarily indicate political control by Assyria."[46]

In essence, Levine is giving voice to Flannery's statement that the impact of one culture upon another does not necessitate "invasion, missionaries or colonization."[47] Any mode of material exchange provides a basis for interaction that may result in such impact, and indeed, not even first-hand contact is required for something to be imprinted upon a receptive cultural entity.

The key word here is receptive. Emulation is discussed briefly by Renfrew as one of six processes by which cultures develop.[48] The implication is that the culture to be "emulated" is generally of a slightly higher level of development or has some desirable aspect for the "emulating" culture, and that it therefore represents an active process of taking on new modes of activity. Emulation is thus a concept that goes beyond the simple material accumulation of foreign goods or influence to the absorption of an information-component that accompanies whatever is taken in materially.

---

[45] Ettinghausen, 1972; Grabar, 1973: esp. 206ff.; Wheeler, 1954: esp. 63–94; Toynbee, 1962:1–17 and 1964; Gilbert, 1972: Pt. III; Bialostocki, 1976.
[46] Levine, 1973:21, note 90.
[47] Flannery, 1968:79.
[48] 1975:33.

Flannery has dealt at length with this process in his study of the influence exerted by the Olmec upon the less-highly developed culture of the Valley of Oaxaca.[49] He cites supporting situations for his model from the ethnographic record, including the relationship of the Tlingit to the inland Athabaskans of the Northwest Coast of North America, and of the valley Shan to the hill Kachin tribes of highland Burma. Subsequently, Wheatley's study of the role Indian traders played in stimulating changes in Malayan culture brought out similar patterns.[50]

In each case, the situation is analogous to that of Hasanlu in relation to Assyria during the 9th century B.C. Assyria at the time represented the major political entity, certainly the greatest military power. Judging from the tribute and booty lists of the 9th century Assyrian kings, Assyria controlled enormous wealth,[51] and was organized according to a highly stratified, complex social hierarchy.[52] In the reign of Assurnasirpal II alone, as mentioned above, the new capitol of Nimrud could absorb ca. 50,000 guests at the dedication ceremonies.[53]

The Assyrian presence as it made itself known in the Zagros and into Iran during much of the 9th century must have been a formidable one. Although this was certainly not the first contact of Iran, or even of the Solduz Valley, with Assyria,[54] it came after a period for which we have no evidence of great activity on the part of the Assyrians. The expansion of the Assyrian military machine in the 9th century B.C. must have staggered the smaller states to the east—not necessarily from the point of view of wealth, if the graves at Marlik are any testimony to the level of material culture in Iran in the early first millennium B.C.,[55] but from the point of view of sheer power. And it will be noted that it is precisely in this sphere that we see the absorption of elements in the local style at Hasanlu: motifs dealing with military activity and the hunt; courtly activity in the processions; and the embellishment of elite public buildings.

---

[49] 1968.
[50] 1975. Similar studies now need to be done with more complex societies, since to date most work has tended to concentrate upon the extension of the major culture into the provinces, rather than on the effect of that extension on the local tradition.
[51] Luckenbill, 1926: 459, 475–477, 479, 501, 585, 592–593, 625, 650, etc.
[52] E.g., Kinnier-Wilson, 1972.
[53] Grayson, 1976: § 682.
[54] Cf. Hamlin, 1974:132.
[55] Negahban, 1964.

This is the difference which distinguishes the gold bowl from Hasanlu, with its isolated mythological motives, from the narrative scenes on the silver beaker.[56] The residents of Hasanlu do not take supernatural motives from Assyrian art, although they have ample models (viz. the cylinder seals); they clearly have a system of their own. They take rather the emblems of authority and power associated with Assyrian royal monuments.

One last aspect of the situations described by Renfrew, Flannery and Wheatley is the level within the borrowing culture at which the influence is absorbed and manipulated. The studies cited deal primarily with the introduction of exotic imported goods, and suggest that in a system of exchange between a less-centralized community and a more centralized group, foreign goods will appear prestigious within the "less-highly-developed" sphere, thus conferring status upon those individuals who control the supply.[57] In general, the upper echelons of society are seen to provide both the entrepreneurs or controllers of the mechanics of exchange and the recipients of the luxury goods.[58]

Luxury goods therefore function as "insignia of status,"[59] and the function of these goods within the local society thus becomes more than the accumulation of wealth. They represent "an attempt on the part of the elite of the less-sophisticated society to adopt behavior, status trappings, symbolism or even language of the more sophisticated group…in short, to absorb some of their charisma."[60]

In social terms, this is affective on two levels simultaneously. First, by adopting elements of the more sophisticated culture, the status of the borrower can be increased with respect to the conferring culture, bringing individuals closer to the level of equals in interaction by decreasing the differences and thus the (power) gap between them. As a result, the homogeneity of the "Interaction Sphere" is also increased.[61] Second,

---

[56] It is this distinction which gives rise to the chronological separation suggested by Porada for the gold bowl and the silver beaker (cf. above, fn. 20), a view disputed by Muscarella (1971).

[57] Cf. Renfrew, 1975:32–33.

[58] Flannery, 1968:105; Wheatley, 1975:242.

[59] Flannery, 1968:100.

[60] Ibid.:105.

[61] The degree to which this would have been encouraged by Assyria is unclear. However, to the extent that we may take models for social interaction from the physical universe, such encouragement seems likely and we are provided with a stimulating perspective from which to view the growing Assyrian Empire of the early 9th century B.C.: "In crystals undergoing transformation, a region having an interaction-pattern

through an emphasis on the newly accumulated wealth and prestige, the power base of the elite within the home society is increased, thereby strengthening the existing social hierarchy while at the same time manipulating the local population by allowing them to identify with the added prestige of the elite and vicariously share in the glory.[62]

It is in this context that I would suggest we view the phenomena observed at Hasanlu with respect to Assyria. A model that includes "emulation" as a significant principle provides for both the adoption of imported goods by the elite at Hasanlu, and also for the attempt to incorporate elements of Assyrian iconography of power into the local art style, which would presumably have had a wider range within the culture than the imported goods. It accounts for the choices made in selecting specific motifs from the broad repertoire of Assyrian art. And it is consistent with the observed architectural sequence: the appropriation of western-style tiles into elite buildings on the citadel and the desire to increase monumentality through the successive addition of porticos (cf. note 32), while retaining the organization of the interior space and the special features (columned hall, benches, focus opposite the entrance, hearth) that reflect traditional modes of behavior.[63] In other words, the graft is external; it is done to make a public show.

The suggestion of a principle of emulation as a model for understanding the form taken by the Hasanlu "local style" and its role within the culture is, of course, based upon the assumption that the embrace of Assyrian elements and the widespread presence of Assyrian goods was meaningful within the culture of Hasanlu and may be used as a significant reflection of cultural attitudes.[64] It sees the "local style" in the perspective of the "great style;" the Little Tradition in terms of the Great Tradition,[65] and as such, suggests a broader definition of a "local style" than that offered at the beginning of this study, one which

---

suggesting the new structure, once it is big enough, grows by demanding and rewarding conformity" (Smith, 1976:36). Implicit, therefore, is that there would be an investment from both directions in the maintenance of the bond and in the closing of the gap between the two cultures.

[62] Cf. Coleman, 1963:70.

[63] That this does represent the norms of an Iranian social system is evidenced from the fact that buildings in the previous phase (level V) follow the same general pattern, minus the porticos (Dyson, In press), and the type then continues into the Median period (Godin Tepe: Young and Levine, 1974:116) and the Achaemenid period (Pasargadae and Persepolis: illustrated in Porada, 1969: figs. 78, 82).

[64] Similarly, Flannery, 1968:106.

[65] Redfield and Singer, 1954:65f.

includes the larger context in which the local style functions. It seems, then, that essential to the notion of a "local style" is that it be defined in terms of its relationship to something else.

Throughout this brief presentation, it will have been noted that the term "influence" has been largely avoided. The influence exerted by so-called developed countries upon less-developed countries today is ultimately no different from that of antiquity,[66] and reference to the "influence" of Assyria upon her neighbors is common.[67] Like the several studies of "influence" in modern money-economies, however,[68] emphasis in all of these cases is placed on the wielder of the influence and on the power exercised.

The limits of this approach for our purposes are made clear by Heinrich von Staden in his study of the effects of Greek art and literature on western culture in the nineteenth century. He sees the term "influence" used generally in the sense of an "emanational, uni-directional force affecting actions and destinies," in which the recipient is viewed essentially as a passive victim; and he then goes on to argue that this is a model which fails utterly to accomodate the complexities inherent in the interaction.[69]

So, too, with art styles, the tendency is to think of influence as an aesthetic overlay—an imprint upon a cultural entity; whereas in fact it should be seen as an active gesture on the part of the receiving culture to identify with or embrace elements presented to it. In the present case, I have by choice dealt very little with the sending party—Assyria, because the desire has been to pursue the significance of the interaction for the population of Hasanlu. Thus the words reception, absorption, emulation have been used here instead of influence, to better reflect the active principle inherent in the process of assimilation. What is ideally required is a feedback model[70] that allows for a complex picture of a system in which a broad spectrum of stimuli is preferred with varying degrees of energy, and individual elements then selected by the receptor according to a set of potentialities, both conscious and unconscious, within his own culture.

---

[66] Cf. Adams, 1975:20.
[67] E.g., upon Kilamuwa of Sam'al in North Syria (Orthmann, 1971:149).
[68] E.g., Parsons, 1963.
[69] Von Staden, 1976:91.
[70] Bauer, 1963:84.

Emphasis on emulation, with all that it entails of increased social stratification and power, as an explanation for the phenomena provided at Hasanlu not only seems to provide the best framework for understanding, it also generates a number of testable implications which can be pursued in the field.

Dyson has posited a settlement pattern in the Solduz Valley of scattered citadels and surrounding villages.[71] One would wish to see from a survey of the Hasanlu Period IVB occupations in the valley just what the hierarchy of sites was, and the distribution of material wealth in relation to size. In addition, if the imported goods at Hasanlu did function as prestige items for the elite, one would expect to see a clear difference in the relative distribution of goods between the citadel and the Lower Town. Conversely, if the "local style" goods are indeed local, one would expect to see a more equal distribution, and possibly even direct evidence for production, in the Lower Town. In fact, if one of the roles of art is to mediate social change[72]—at the same time reflecting and manipulating public attitudes—and *if* interaction with Assyria did lead to a strengthening of the hierarchy within the social structure of Hasanlu, then one would postulate the *necessity* for local style goods emulating hierarchical values in the Lower Town, where they would best fulfill their propagandistic potential.

That the tendency is for interaction with a more highly-ranked society to lead to an increase in the social stratification of the local system has been noted by Renfrew, Flannery and Wheatley,[73] and had already been suggested by Dyson for Hasanlu in 1966.[74] Certainly the continuous building on the citadel during the occupation of Period IVB attests to great activity in the elite quarters. Although we are presented with an unusual amount of material remains on the citadel because of the sudden destruction of the site at the end of the 9th century[75] and could not hope to find the same degree of preservation in the earlier Iron Age level V, nevertheless, the presence or absence of Assyrian goods and the extent of the occupation on the citadel in that period would be significant in determining if the Period IVB construction is

---

[71] 1966:416.
[72] Vance, 1973:571.
[73] Renfrew, 1975:33; Flannery, 1968:104; Wheatley, 1975:242, 257.
[74] Dyson, 1966:416.
[75] Dyson, 1965:202–03.

to be correlated with Assyrian contact. A further test situation could
be set up in the Lower Town, to determine if there was evidence for
the same stratigraphic phases as on the citadel—i.e. if the shift from
Hasanlu V to IV was a function of the history of the whole population
or only of the elite quarters.

Due to the abandonment of Hasanlu for a time after its destruc-
tion at the end of the 9th century, it would not be possible to follow
through on the long-term effects at the site of contact with Assyria.
Still, in light of the great amount of information already available as a
result of the Hasanlu Project's excavation of level IVB on the citadel,
further investigation of the relationship between Hasanlu V and IVB;
between the citadel and the Lower Town; and between the mound and
the valley would provide us with much valuable information concerning
the processes described here.

<div align="center">*   *   *</div>

All of these questions have been raised through an attempt to come
to grips with the "local style" as it exists at Hasanlu. It is generally
acknowledged that art objects embody cultural values, and serve as
media for communication and information storage.[76] Therefore, the
adoption of an art style and the molding of it into a local style is equally
a function of the cultural process. In fact, the new style can be *both*
a reflection of phenomena already existing at some level within the
society *and* a mediating factor in reinforcing or integrating new social
values on other levels.[77]

It seems as if I have taken a number of pages to state the obvious:
the embeddedness of the art work in a context, and the dependence
of the Hasanlu local style upon Assyria. Yet in the perspective of the
local style emulating Assyrian social values as much as art styles, I would
hope that we are brought a bit closer to understanding both the impact
that the Assyrian Empire must have had on its less highly-developed
neighbors, and the specific cultural processes operating at the site of
Hasanlu during the 9th century B.C.

---

[76] E.g., Sieber, 1962:654; Otten, 1971:xiv.
[77] Merriam, 1964:226, 235.

Acknowledgments

References

Adams, Robert McC. 1975. "From Sites to Patterns." *University of Chicago Magazine* (Winter): 19–20.

Andrae, Walter. 1925. *Coloured Ceramics from Ashur.* London.

Barnett, Richard D. 1957. *A Catalogue of the Nimrud Ivories in the British Museum.* London.

———. 1967. "Assyria and Iran: The earliest representations of Persians." In *A Survey of Persian Art*, Vol. XIV, ed. A. Upham Pope, pp. 2997–3007. Tokyo.

———. 1973. "More Balawat Gates: A preliminary report." In *Symbolae Biblicae et Mesopotamicae*, eds. M. A. Beek et al., pp. 16–22. Leiden.

Bauer, Raymond A. 1963. "Communications as a Transaction: A comment on 'On the Concept of Influence'." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 27:83–86.

Bialostocki, Jan. 1976. *The Art of the Renaissance in Eastern Europe.* Ithaca, New York.

Borillo, Martin. 1974. "Construction of a Deductive Model by Simulation of a Traditional Archaeological Study." *American Antiquity* 39:243–52.

Brendel, Otto J. 1953. "Prolegomena to a Book on Roman Art." *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome* XXI:7–73.

Canby, Jeanny V., 1971, "Decorated Garments in Ashurnasirpal's Sculpture." *Iraq* 33:31–53.

Coleman, James S. 1963. "Comments on 'On the Concept of Influence'." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 27:63–82.

Dyson, Robert H., Jr. 1959. "Digging in Iran: Hasanlu 1958." *Expedition* 1:4–18.

———. 1960. "Hasanlu and Early Iran." *Archaeology* 13:118–29.

———. 1965. "Problems of Protohistoric Iran as seen from Hasanlu," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 24:193–217.

———. 1966. "The Hasanlu Project." In *New Roads to Yesterday*, ed. J. R. Caldwell, pp. 413–35. New York.

———. 1976. "A Review of the Architecture and Radiocarbon Chronology of Hasanlu I–IV." Paper delivered to the Columbia University Seminar on the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East and the Aegean, March 12, 1976.

———. 1977. "Architecture of the Iron I Period at Hasanlu in Northwestern Iran and its Implications for Theories of Migration onto the Iranian Plateau." *Conference on the Archaeology of Iran and Central Asia.* Centre Nationale des Recherches Scientifiques, Paris, March 22–24. In press.

Dyson, Robert H., Jr. And Vincent C. Pigott. 1975. "Report of Current Excavations: Hasanlu," *Iran* 13:161–62.

Ettinghausen, Richard. 1972. *From Byzantium to Sassanian Iran and the Islamic World.* Leiden.

Flannery, Kent V. 1968. "The Olmec and the Valley of Oaxaca: A model for interregional interaction in Formative times." In *Dumbarton Oaks Conference on the Olmec*, ed. E. P. Benton, pp. 79–109. Washington D.C.

———. 1972. "Evolutionary Trends in Social Exchange and Interaction," In *Social Exchange and Interaction*, ed. E. N. Wilmsen, pp. 129–35. University of Michigan Museum of Anthropology, Anthropological Papers, No. 46.

Gilbert, Creighton E. 1972. *History of Renaissance Art.* New York.

Grabar, Oleg. 1973. *The Formation of Islamic Art.* New Haven.

Grayson, A. K. 1976. *Assyrian Royal Inscriptions*, Vol. 2. Wiesbaden.

Hamlin, Carol (Kramer). 1974. "The Early Second Millennium Ceramic Assemblage of Dinkha Tepe." *Iran* 12:125–53.

King, L. W. 1915. *The Bronze Reliefs from the Gates of Shalmaneser, King of Assyria.* London.

Kinnier-Wilson, J. V. 1962. "The Kurba'il Statue of Shalmaneser III," *Iraq* 24:90–115.

———. 1972. *The Nimrud Wine Lists.* London.

Kroeber, A. L. 1957. *Style and Civilization*. Ithaca, New York.

Layard, Sir Austin Henry, 1849, *Monuments of Nineveh*. London.

Levine, Louis D. 1973. "Geographical Studies in the Neo-Assyrian Zagros—I." *Iran* 11:1–27.

Luckenbill, Daniel David. 1926. *Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia*, Vol. 1. Chicago.

Madhloom, T. A. 1970. *The Chronology of Neo-Assyrian Art*. London.

Mallowan, Sir Max and Leri Glynn Davies, 1970, *Ivories in Assyrian Style*. Ivories from Nimrud 1949–1963, Fascicule II. London.

Merriam, A. P. 1964. "The Arts and Anthropology." In *Horizons of Anthropology*, ed. Sol Tax, pp. 224–36. Chicago.

Mills, George. 1957. "Art: An introduction to qualitative anthropology." *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 16:1–17.

Muscarella, Oscar White. 1966. "Hasanlu 1964." *Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art* 25:121–35.

———. 1971. "Hasanlu in the 9th Century B.C. and its Relations with Other Cultural Centers of the Near East." Resumé of a lecture given to the Columbia University Seminar on the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East and the Aegean. *American Journal of Achaeology* 75:263–66.

In press *Catalogue of the Hasanlu Ivories*.

Negahban, Ezat O. 1964. *Marlik*. Tehran.

Orthmann, Winfried. 1971. *Untersuchungen zur späthetitischen Kunst*. Bonn.

Otten, Charlotte, ed. 1971. *Anthropology and Art: Readings in cross-cultural aesthetics*. Garden City.

Parsons, Talcott. 1963. "On the Concept of Influence." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 27: 37–62.

Porada, Edith. 1959. The Hasanlu Bowl." *Expedition* 1:19–22.

———. 1967. "Notes on the Gold Bowl and Silver Beaker from Hasanlu." In *A Survey of Persian Art*, Vol. XIV, ed. A. Upham Pope, pp. 2971–2978. Tokyo.

———. 1969. *The Art of Ancient Iran*. New York.

———. 1974. "Iranische Kunst." In *Propylaean Kunstgeschichte*, Vol. 2, ed. W. Orthmann, pp. 363–98. Berlin.

Redfield, Robert, 1959, "Art and Icon." In *Aspects of Primitive Art*. Museum of Primitive Art, New York.

Redfield, Robert and Milton B. Singer. 1954. "The Cultural Role of Cities." *Economic Development and Cultural Change* 3:53–73.

Renfrew, Colin. 1975. "Trade as Action at a Distance: Questions of integration and communication." In *Ancient Civilizations and Trade*, eds. J. A. Sabloff and C. C. Lamberg-Karlovsky, pp. 3–59. Albuquerque.

Schapiro, Meyer. 1953. "Style." In *Anthropology Today*, ed. A. L. Kroeber, pp. 287–312. Chicago.

Smith, Cyril S. 1976. "On Art, Invention and Technology." *Technology Review* 78 (7): 36–41.

Von Staden, Heinrich. 1976. "Nietzsche and Marx on Greek Art and Literature: Case studies in reception." *Daedalus* 105 (1):79–96.

Taşyurek, O. A. 1975. "Some New Assyrian Rock-Reliefs in Turkey." *Anatolian Studies* 25:169–80.

Toynbee, J. M. C. 1962. *Art in Roman Britain*. London.

———. 1964. *Art in Britain Under the Romans*. Oxford.

Vance, Eugene, 1973, "Signs of the City: Medieval poetry as detour." *New Literary History* 4:557–74.

Wheatley, Paul. 1975. "Satyānṛta in Suvarṇadvīpa: From reciprocity to redistribution in ancient Southeast Asia." In *Ancient Civilizations and Trade*, eds. J. A. Sabloff and C. C. Lamberg-Karlovsky, pp. 227–84. Albuquerque.

Wheeler, Sir R. E. M. 1954. *Rome Beyond the Imperial Frontiers*. Westport, Conn.

Winter, Irene J. 1973. "North Syria in the Early First Millennium B.C., with Special Reference to Ivory Carving." Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Columbia University, New York.

Wiseman, D. J. 1952. "A New Stela of Aššur-Naṣir-Pal II." *Iraq* 14:24–39.

Young, T. Cuyler, Jr., 1966, "Some Thoughts on the Architecture of Hasanlu IV." *Iranica Antiqua* 6:48–71.

Young, T. Cuyler, Jr. and Louis D. Levine. 1974. *Excavations of the Godin Project: Second progress report.* Royal Ontario Museum of Art and Archaeology, Occasional Paper 26. Toronto.

Figure 1a. Silver beaker with electrum appliqué. HAS.58–427. Burned Building
I. (Tehran, photo: Rostami, reproduced courtesy of Time-Life Corpration).
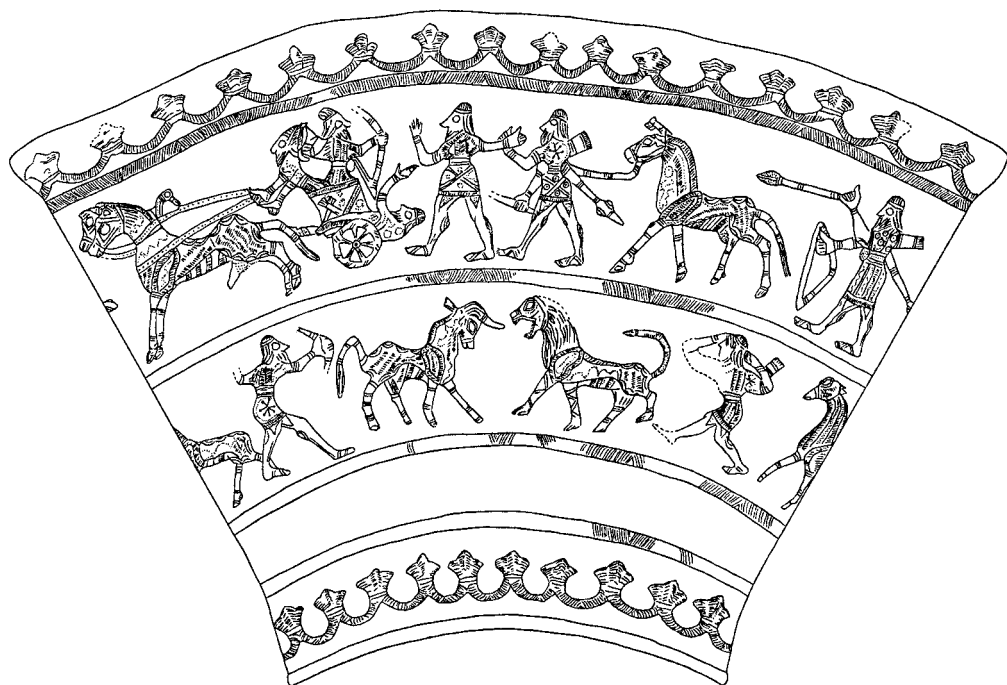
Figure 1b. Drawing of Silver Beaker, HAS.58–427. Burned Building I.
Drawing by Grace Freed Muscarella, from photographs.
(Tehran, Musée Iran Bastan).

Figure 2. Drawing of Clay Sealing, HAS.60.478. Burned Building II. Field
drawing by M. van Loon. (Philadelphia, University Museum 61.5.23).

Figure 3. Detail of an ivory pedestal. HAS.64–930 + 935. Burned Building II. (New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 65.163.1).

Figure 4. Ivory plaque fragment. HAS.64–920. Burned Building II.
(New York, MMA, Rogers Fund, 65.163.16).

Figure 5. Copper/bronze plaque from the side of a wooden box. HAS.62–
1054. Burned Building III. (Tehran).

Figure 6. Ivory head with gold headdress. HAS.64–933. Burned Building II. (Tehran).

Figure 7. Detail of an ivory pedestal. HAS.64–930 + 935. Burned Building II. (New York, MMA, Rogers Fund, 65.163.1).

Figure 8. Cast bronze lion-pin finial. Cemetary Area, purchase. (Philadelphia, U.M. 56.20.1).

Figure 9. Ivory plaque fragment. HAS.64–918. Burned Building II.
(New York, MMA, Rogers Fund, 65.163.10).

Figure 10. Composite paste cylinder seal. HAS.59–742. Burned Building II. (Tehran).

Figure 11. Ivory plaque fragment. HAS.64–757. Burned Building II.
(New York, MMA, Rogers Fund, 65.163.19).

Figure 12. Ivory plaque fragment. HAS.64–774. Burned Building II.
(New York, MMA, Rogers Fund, 65.163.21).

Figure 14. Ivory plaque fragment. HAS.64–1065. Burned Building II. (New
York, MMA, Rogers Fund, 65.163.25.).
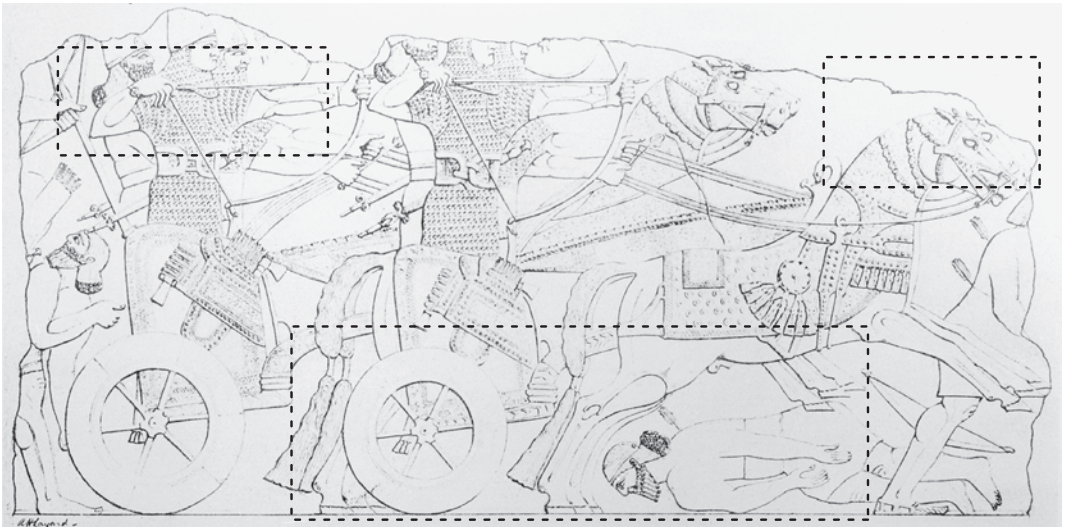
Figure 13. Drawing of a relief. Palace of Assurnasirpal II, Nimrud. (Layard, 1849: Pl. 29; original in London, The British Museum).
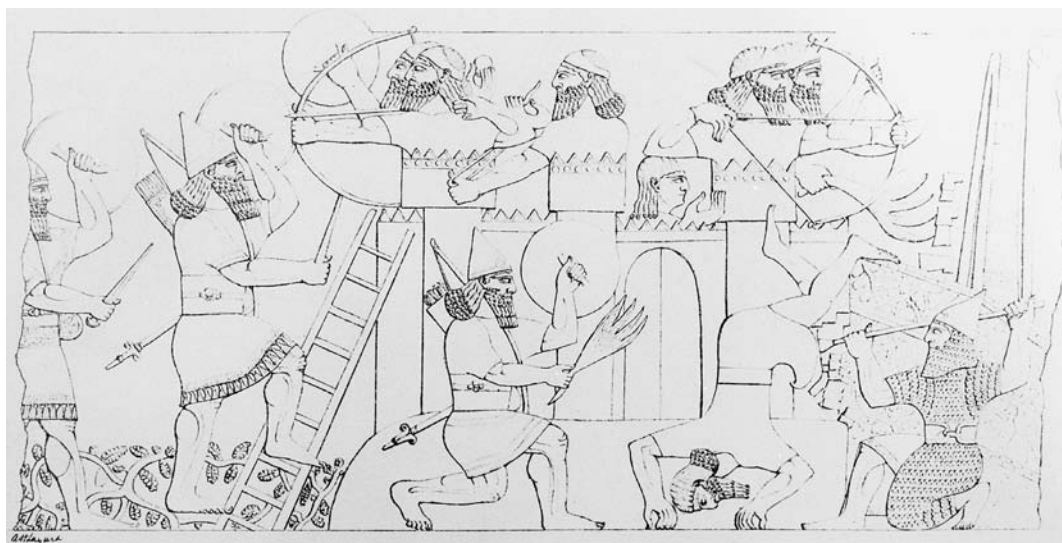
Figure 15. Drawing of a relief. Palace of Assurnasirpal II, Nimrud. (Layard, 1849: Pl. 29; original in London, The British Museum).

Figure 16. Copper/bronze plaque from the side of a wooden box. HAS.62–1056. Burned Building III. (Philadelphia, U.M. 63.5.177).
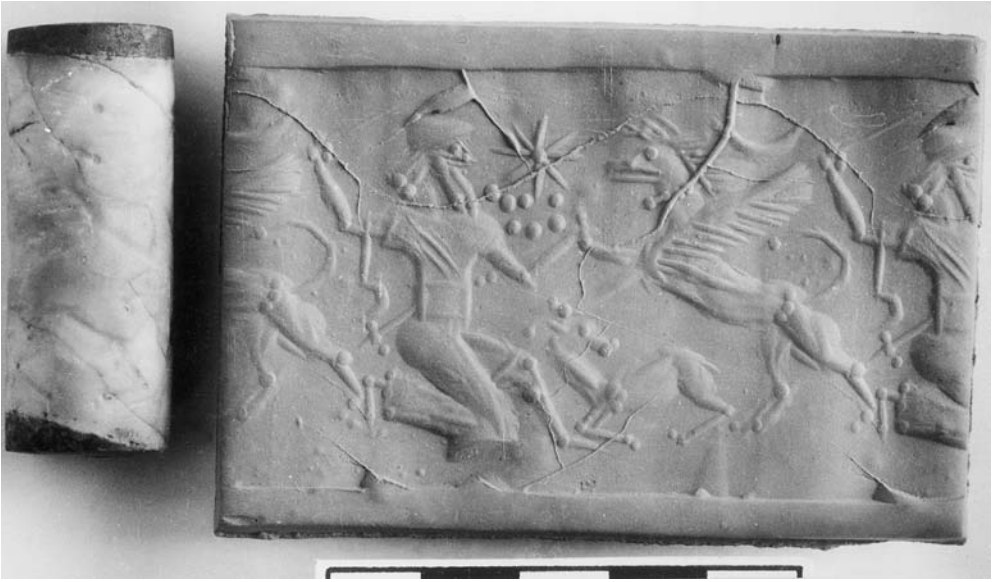
Figure 17. White marble (?) cylinder seal, Assyrian import. HAS.60–13. Outside Burned Building I East. (Philadelphia, U.M. 61.5.19).
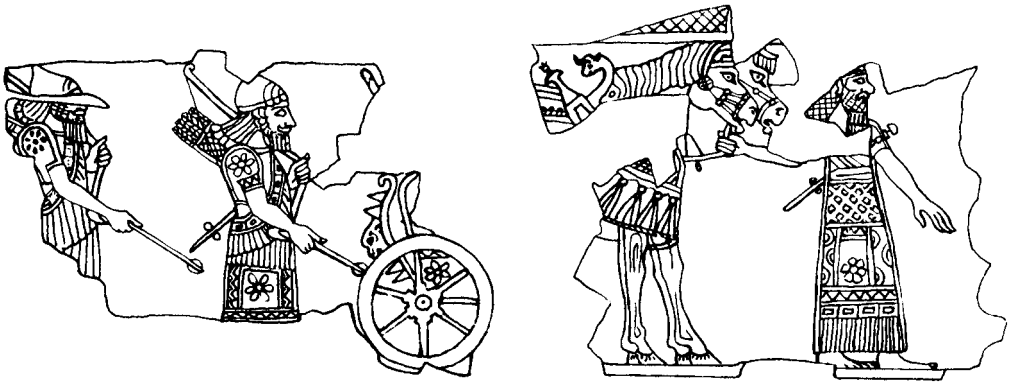
Figure 18. Drawing of an incised ivory panel. ND 5612. Nabu Temple, Nimrud. (Baghdad, Iraq Museum; photograph courtesy Wm. Collins, Sons).

Figure 19. Glazed wall-tile. HAS.70–360. Lower Court, outside of Burned Building IV. (Tehran).

ON THE PROBLEMS OF KARATEPE:
THE RELIEFS AND THEIR CONTEXT

It is a good maxim that all controversial archaeological issues should be reviewed regularly in the light of new material and/or changing perspectives; and certainly one of the most controversial issues in the history of the early first millennium B.C. in the Near East has been the dating of the reliefs and inscriptions built into the two Citadel Gates at Karatepe (see contour map, fig. 1).

The site itself, set on the west bank of the Ceyhan River in the northeast corner of Cilicia, sits on a natural hill just south of a spur of the foothills that mark the beginning of the juncture of the Taurus and Amanus mountain ranges (cf. maps, figs. 2, 3). It was first discovered and explored in 1946 by a Turkish team, headed by H. Th. Bossert, investigating ancient road systems of the "Neo-Hittite" period.[1] Active field seasons were initiated at Karatepe, along with soundings at the neighbouring site of Domuztepe on the opposite bank of the Ceyhan, and were continued through the mid-1950s, since which time restoration has been in process at Karatepe under the direction of Professor Halet Çambel of Istanbul University.

---

[1] Soon after the discovery of the site, two volumes were published containing a summary of the surface finds and results of the preliminary survey of the region: H. Th. Bossert and Halet Çambel, *Karatepe: A preliminary report on a new Hittite site*, Istanbul, 1946; and H. Th. Bossert and U. Bahadır Alkım, *Karatepe: Kadirli and its Environments. Second preliminary report*, Istanbul, 1947. Then, with the initiation of annual field seasons, excavation reports appeared in *Belleten* from 1947 on. The early seasons were summarized in Bossert, Alkım and Çambel, *Karatepe Kazıları (Die Ausgrabungen auf dem Karatepe, Erster Vorbericht)*, Ankara, 1950. Since that time, the site has generated a vast literature on specific aspects of the material. Two recent discussions, D. Ussishkin, "The Date of the Neo-Hittite Enclosure in Karatepe", *Anat. Stud. XIX* (1969) 121–137, and F. Steinherr, "Zu einigen Problemen von Karatepe", *WO 6* (1970–71) 166–182, have provided quite complete bibliographies. It was decided therefore not to repeat them here, but simply to refer to relevant studies as the documentation requires in the course of the following article.

The significance of the site was immediately apparent, as basalt blocks including fragments of inscriptions in two languages and sculptural decoration were discovered. From these it was determined that: (1) the inscription in West Semitic characters, which turned out to be Phoenician, constituted the longest text found to date in that language, and provided important epigraphical data; (2) the second text, in hieroglyphic Hittite, or Luwian, was sufficiently parallel in content to permit important inroads into the scholarly study of that script and language; (3) the reliefs and sculpture found at Karatepe, executed in a mixture of styles and iconographic traditions related to, though sufficiently distinct from, other known monuments of southeast Anatolia and northern Syria, provided an independent picture of the same cultural diversity as was reflected in the two languages of the inscriptions.

As the text of the Phoenician inscription was made available, it also became clear that the contents, describing the ethnic and historical situation in Cilicia at the time, presented a unique perspective on the region from the inside, complementing references in the annals of the kings of Assyria to political and military activity in the area. And finally, subsequent studies of the road systems surrounding the site raised important questions regarding the strategic location of the fortification and routes of communication equally relevant to the historical situation of the citadel.

That both the inscriptions and the monuments fitted well into the tradition of the early first millennium B.C. was clear from the first report.[2] However the *specific* historical moment in which it was all happening and the correlation with known Assyrian kings and their campaigns in Cilicia has proved far more difficult. Initially, a date in the second half of the eighth century B.C. was proposed by the excavators, on the basis of an assumed correspondence between mention in the Karatepe inscriptions of one Awarikus, king of the Danunites (to whom Azatiwatas, author of the texts, owed allegiance), and Urikki, king of Que (Cilicia), mentioned in the annals of Tiglath-pileser III (744–727 B.C.).[3] A few diverging opinions were offered for slightly later dates, in the

---

[2] Bossert and Çambel, *Karatepe: preliminary report*, p. 14.

[3] H. Th. Bossert, "Die Phönizisch–Hethitischen Bilinguen von Karatepe", *Belleten XII* (1948) 531. The spelling followed for Azatiwatas *(â-x-za-ti-wa-ta/ra/i-)* is that proposed in J. D. Hawkins, A. Morpurgo-Davies and G. Neumann, *Hittite Hieroglyphs and Luwian: New Evidence for the Connection* (Nachrichten der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen I. Philologische-historische Klasse. Jahrgang 1973, Nr. 6), Göttingen, 1974, p. 21.

reigns of Sennacherib (704–681) or Esarhaddon (680–669).[4] In recent years, however, following the work of Goetze, the trend has been in favour of a ninth century date, corresponding generally to the activities of Shalmaneser III (858–824).[5]

In terms of the present study, it should be stated from the outset that no neat and conclusive solution will be presented here to the problem of the dating of Karatepe. However, I do feel that evidence may be found within the reports published thus far to argue decisively for a date *after* the ninth century, while at the same time not excluding ninth-century factors significant in the construction of the fortification. In brief, these arguments will be based upon a stylistic analysis of the two groups of reliefs which decorate the North and South Gates of the enclosure wall, and upon the archaeological evidence provided not only by Karatepe itself, but also by Domuztepe across the river—all integrated within the particular historical and geographical context provided for the site.

I. *Questions of Style*

The Karatepe reliefs are carved on basalt orthostats which line the T-shaped entries and gatehouses to the North and South ends of the fortification wall. The approach to each gate is further marked by a pair of portal lions, and the North Gate chamber by a pair of portal sphinxes.

In the initial publication of the reliefs, it was noted immediately that the carving can be divided quite readily into two groups of different style. Halet Çambel has designated these (A) and (B), speaking of the first, with pronounced "Neo-Hittite" physiognomy, as characterized by movement and good proportions; the second as cruder, flatter work,

---

[4] M. J. Mellink, "Karatepe, More Light on the Dark Ages", *Bibl. Or. VII:5* (1950) 141–150; I. Lévy, "Les inscriptions de Karatepe", *La Nouvelle Clio I–II* (1949–50) 105–121.

[5] R. D. Barnett, J. Leveen and C. Moss, "A Phoenician Inscription from Eastern Cilicia", *Iraq* 10 (1948) 56–71; R. D. Barnett, "Karatepe, the Key to the Hittite Hieroglyphs", *AS* III (1953) 53–95; C. Gordon, "Azitawadd's Phoenician Inscription", *JNES* 8 (1949) 108–9; A. Goetze, "Cilicians", *JCS* 16 (1962) 48–58; W. F. Albright, "Some Oriental Glosses on the Homeric Problem", *AJA* 54 (1950) 162–176 and especially 172; *idem*, in "Some Recent Archaeological Publications", *BASOR* 180 (1965) 41; Ussishkin, *AS XIX*, passim, including bibliography, fn. 10.

more awkward at times, but with less exaggerated facial features.[6] This distinction has been elaborated by Orthmann, who nonetheless concludes, as did Çambel, that the two groups are essentially contemporary and simply the products of different workshops.[7] Ussishkin also assumes the two to be contemporary.[8]

Unfortunately, the principal themes depicted on the reliefs: chariot complex, banquet scenes, male goat-bearer, etc., are of little help in establishing the absolute date of the reliefs, as all have parallels in both ninth and eighth century works from the neighbouring region of North Syria.[9] Therefore, arguments must rest primarily upon questions of style, and on individual details which may be shown to be chronologically bound.

Certainly the facial physiognomy evident in the group (A) reliefs (e.g. fig. 4, right)—showing very pronounced noses and almost no chin—are most characteristic of ninth century reliefs such as those seen at Tell Halaf and Zincirli—compare, for example, the Karatepe goat-bearer to a similar figure from the Citadel Gate at Zincirli;[10] and, as Ussishkin has pointed out, certain of the details on reliefs of group (A), such as the sword-type, find their best parallels in the ninth century as well.[10a] On the other hand, not only facial features, but also the physical proportion of figures from group (B) seem to conform best to eighth century works from Zincirli and Sakçagözü. To cite but two examples: on the banquet orthostat of group (B), from the east side of the South Gate entry, we see a seated figure before a table, a small whisk-bearing

---

[6] H. Çambel, "Karatepe: An Archaeological Introduction to a Recently Discovered Hittite Site in Southern Anatolia", *Oriens* I (1948) 147–149. That flat and crude carving on reliefs cannot be used as an absolute criterion for dating is evident from the reliefs in Assyrian style from Arslan Tash—variously dated between the turtanship of Šamši-ilu, attested at least between 780 and 753 B.C., and the reign of Tiglath-pileser III (744–727), but surely of the eighth century (cf. F. Thureau-Dangin *et al., Arslan Tash*, Paris, 1931, esp. Pl. XIII: 1 & 3, and on the dating, J. E. Reade, "The Neo-Assyrian Court and Army: Evidence from the Sculptures", *Iraq* XXXIV (1972) 89).

[7] W. Orthmann, *Untersuchungen zur späthethitischen Kunst*, Bonn, 1971, pp. 106–111 and 142–144 (henceforth, *USK*).

[8] Ussishkin, *AS* XIX, p. 126.

[9] Cf. Orthmann, *USK*, Pls. 9a, 1 lb, c, 24a, c–f, 30e–h, 37a, b, 42a, b, 43i, 57a–c (all = 9th century); 45d, g, 46a, 47f, 48i, 51c, f, 52f, 64c, 66d (= 8th century); and M. Mallowan and G. Herrmann, *Ivories from Nimrud (1949–1963), Fascicule III: Furniture from SW7, Fort Shalmaneser*, Aberdeen, 1974, Nos. 1, 47, 49, 50 and 66.

[10] Orthmann, *USK*, Pls. 15h || 57b; see also here fig. 4 right and fig. 8 from Karatepe as compared to fig. 11 from Zincirli of the 9th century.

[10a] Ussishkin, *AS* XIX, p. l32.

attendant behind him, while on a slab found on the opposite side of the same entry are depicted two registers of attendants and musicians. In both cases, the proportions of the small squat figures, standing compact and vertical, find their closest parallels in the attendant figures of Hilani III at Zincirli and of the palace façade at Sakçagözü (fig. 4, left, and fig. 6).[11] The rendering of their hair and beards also compare best to these eighth century works, as does the tradition of whisk-bearer behind the seated figure; and in this respect, too, the representations of Zincirli and Sakçagözü, although clearly more "elaborate" in style and attention to surface detail, still provide the best comparisons to the Karatepe (B) seated figure and attendants.[12]

Similarly, the musicians of the South Gate entry, with their tambour, lyre and double-flute-players, seem closest to the musicians of the Nordhallenbau at Zincirli, as well as to those of an ivory pyxis from Nimrud attributed by Mallowan to the eighth century.[13] Further, Akurgal has

---

[11] *USK*, Pls. 10h || 50a, 64c and 65a–f.

[12] Ibid., Pls. 19d || 45d, g, 47d, 50a, 63b, c, 66c, d. For a definition of this "elaborate" style, cf. E. Akurgal, *The Art of Greece: Its Origins*, New York, 1968, Ch. III. Ussishkin has argued that the absence of a moustache on the upper lip of these figures should support a 9th century date, parallel to similar occurrences at Tell Halaf, Carchemish and Zincirli (*AS* XIX, p. 129). He noted that a sequential development to a full moustache is observable in Sam'al and should therefore be true for Karatepe as well. However there does seem to be evidence that the absence of an upper-lip moustache is not a valid criterion for dating, as on a series of ivory carvings found at Nimrud and attributed to Sam'al, one sees both types although the entire group seems to be of the (second half of the) 8th century (cf. e.g., Mallowan and Herrmann, op. cit. [n. 9], Nos. 1–22 vs. No. 64, and I. J. Winter, "Carved Ivory Furniture Panels from Nimrud: A coherent subgroup of the North Syrian Style", *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 11 (1976) 25–54). Furthermore, Ussishkin himself notes that the frontal Bes reliefs from Karatepe do have full upper-lip moustaches. In any event, this detail takes on less importance in view of the other, more compelling arguments from proportion and hairstyle—especially the particular, detailed coiffure seen on the musicians and attendants. For, quite consistently from Assurnaṣirpal II of Assyria to Kilamua of Sam'al in the 9th century, hair is shown as a series of curls flowing back from the nape of the neck to the shoulder, while in the 8th century and later, the hair comes straight from the crown, terminating in two or three rows of tight curls which sit squarely on the nape—exactly as they do on the Karatepe attendants relief of group (B) (cf. e.g., E. A. W. Budge, *Assyrian Sculptures in the British Museum, The Reign of Ashur-Nasir-pal, 885–860* B.C., London, 1914, Pls. XXIX, XXXI as compared to Budge, *Assyrian Sculptures in the British Museum, From Shalmaneser III to Sennacherib*, London, 1938, Pls. XXV, XXVIII (Sargon II)–LXV–LXVII (Sennacherib), and apparent also in North Syria, e.g., Orthmann, *USK*, Pls. 14e, 49d, 63b–d.

[13] *USK*, Pl. 18c || 63g; and M. Mallowan, *Nimrud and its Remains I*, New York, 1968, fig. 168. A second "musicians" pyxis from Nimrud (R. D. Barnett, *Catalogue of the Nimrud Ivories*, London, 1957, S. 3) has been found to include a short inscription on the base in Aramaean, with the designation of the North Syrian state of Bt-Gš—i.e., Bit Guši, or Arpad (cf. E. Puech, "Un ivoire de Bit-Guši (Arpad) à Nimrud", *Syria LV* (1978),

pointed out that the shoes worn by the Karatepe musicians, with their turned-up toes and thongs at the ankle, appear also on the rock relief at Ivriz inscribed by Urpalla of Tyana, a contemporary of Tiglath-pileser III and Sargon II of Assyria, and do not appear earlier.[14]

I would also suggest that the orthostats of chariots with 8-spoked wheel and large cab for three persons, as well as the draught horses with shoulder ornament and chin tassel, find their best parallels in eighth- rather than ninth-century contexts—i.e., the wheels, general proportions and horses from Sakçagözü, and the size of the cab and horses on an ivory of North Syrian style found at Nimrud and attributed to Sam'al (compare, e.g., figs. 8 and 9 with fig. 11).[15]

Related works from regions other than North Syria are also helpful in any discussion of the possible date of the Karatepe reliefs—particularly material from Phrygia, Greece and the Phoenician coast. For example,

---

163–169. This pyxis is particularly interesting, as in addition to the musicians, one sees a small crouching, simian-like figure underneath the table opposite a seated figure, just as on the Karatepe group (A) banquet relief. The significance of these figures is not at all understood, though they seem to have had a long history in Anatolia and in the Levant (cf. H. Frankfort, *Cylinder Seals*, London, 1939, Pl. XXXIX*k*; and most recently, W. Culican, "Syrian and Cypriot Cubical Seals", *Levant* IX (1977), p. 164 and Pl. XVIIB).

[14] Akurgal, *Greece*, p. 138.

[15] Orthmann, *USK*, Pl. 51c, and Mallowan and Herrmann, op. cit. (n. 9) No. 1. This, *contra* Ussishkin, who explains away too easily the later wheel type and larger cab by reference to the fact that some of the enemies of Assurnasirpal II on 9th century reliefs use eight-spoked wheels, and the Hittites at the battle of Qadesh in the 13th century B.C. likewise had eight-spoked wheels on chariots that carried three men. His contention is that this is no valid criterion for a late date for the Karatepe relief, given the above precedents if the more advanced type had indeed evolved first in North Syria. But he is then forced into elaborate convolutions to explain that the chariots on the 9th century reliefs of the Long Wall at Carchemish (and presumably also at Malatya) have only six-spoked wheels and carry only two men because those states had already suc- cumbed to "Assyrian influence"—presumably therefore regressing to a less advanced form of vehicle in the process (cf. *AS* XIX, p. 127). Like the upper-lip or full moustache, it would seem that these attributes cannot be used as absolute indicators of dates, but rather fall into general clusters of dates; there certainly are exceptions to most tight chronologies built on aspects of style and iconography. However in the present case, even on abstract grounds, it seems unlikely that Charchemish or Malatya would have either given up superior technology in the face of Assyrian influence, or changed their representations to match Assyrian imagery inconsistent with the actual chariots they were using. In any event, it is now clear that the Carchemish and Malatya reliefs precede those of Assurnasirpal II in date, thus further weakening his reconstruction. To date, the earliest attested example of an eight-spoked wheel on a North Syrian relief seems to be that of the Tell Tainat orthostat, for which the present writer has argued in favour of a date in the first half of the 8th century (cf. I. J. Winter, "North Syria in the Early First Millennium B.C...." PhD dissertation, Columbia University, New York, 1973, pp. 236–239).

the (B)-group orthostat of attendants to a banquet, referred to above, includes a representation of an individual carrying a spouted pitcher with fluted body in one hand and a fluted open bowl in the other (fig. 4 left and detail, fig. 7). The first vessel is of a type recognized as Phrygian, with its spout at right angles to the strap handle, and is generally dated to the second half of the eighth century on the basis of excavated pottery and metal examples from Gordion and Alishar.[16] An actual vase of this type in bronze was found at Tell Halaf, in a grave with a Phrygian bowl with vertical wishbone handle (fig. 5).[17] The omphalos-type bowl carried in the other hand of the attendant at Karatepe is also extremely close to actual Phrygian examples, of which so many were recovered in the Royal Tomb at Gordion.[18] It is unfortunate that we do not know more about the history of these vessel types in the ninth century B.C.[19] But given the present limits to our knowledge, the Karatepe representation stands as a very explicit reference to known forms of the second half of the eighth century—precisely at a time when we know that the Phrygian king, Mita of Muški, was involved with the politics of Cilicia (on which, cf. below).

On the lower register of the same orthostat (fig. 4), among the musicians, is one playing a symmetrical lyre with a U-shaped body and central strings attached at the top to a horizontal bar. It is the same instrument, although more exactly represented, as the lyre played by a musician on an orthostat of group (A) from the North Gate.[20] In an article on a group of incised scaraboid seals found in Cilicia and elsewhere, Edith Porada has argued that this type of lyre is not native to the Near East,

---

[16] Cf. on this, Akurgal, *Greece*, p. 141.

[17] M. von Oppenheim *et al., Tell Halaf, Vol. IV*, Berlin, 1962, Pl. 48.

[18] A. K. Knudsen, "A Study of the Relation Between Phrygian Metalware and Pottery in the 8th and 7th Centuries B.C.", unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, 1961.

[19] A similar general type of vessel is represented on the Water Gate reliefs from Carchemish (*USK*, Pl. 21c), which are generally attributed to a very early (late second millennium to early first) date. However, that example, with its rounded body and no foot, is clearly only a general relative when compared in the strap-handled, spouted vase category with the more angular example from Karatepe, with its elaborate fluting and pedestal base typologically identical to Phrygian pieces. Since the ritual function of these spouted vessels is attested in general from Hittite Empire times, it is precisely the changes in detail that become significant chronological indicators (cf. O. W. Muscarella, *Ancient Art: The Norbert Schimmel Collection*, Mainz, 1974, no. 123, for a representation of the Hittite period).

[20] Orthmann. *USK*, Pl. 17f.

and rather derives from Greece.[21] The lyre is represented on a number of these seals, and more recently John Boardman demonstrated that they are not only at home in Cilicia, but also can be restricted in date to the late eighth–early seventh century, based upon finds in closed contexts, such as in tombs from the Greek colony at Pithycoussai.[22] It has also be queried whether some of the crested helmets depicted on several reliefs from Karatepe do not ultimately derive from Greek models.[23]

Further information bearing upon the Karatepe reliefs comes to us from Greece, in the many representations of sea-faring boats on early Geometric pottery. There has been much discussion about the form of the vessel, identified as a warship, on the orthostat from the North Gate chamber (fig. 10).[24] The same sort of ship, with inward-curving stern, ram, fore- and aft-platforms and railing, can be seen on Greek pottery of the mid-to-late-eighth century.[25] There is no evidence that this type of vessel was only Greek, however. The same shape boat with ram and in-curving stern is represented on a Sidonian coin of the fourth century B.C., and is clearly Phoenician.[26] Further, the Phoenician biremes represented on a relief of Sennacherib are essentially the same boat,[27] despite the fact that they are much more sophisticated in the double bank of oars and have a less-pronounced point to the ram. Such a ship is also depicted in one of the wall-paintings from Til Barsib on the Euphrates, most probably eighth century in date.[28] Once again, we do

---

[21] E. Porada, "A Lyre-Player from Tarsus and his Relations", in S. Weinberg, ed., *The Aegean and the Near East: Studies Presented to Hetty Goldman*, Locust Valley, NY, 1956, p. 204.

[22] G. Buchner and J. Boardman, "Seals from Ischia and the Lyre-Player Group", *JDAI* 81 (1966) 1–62. Porada, too, noted as a postscript in her article (p. 206, fn. 66) that the number of seals now known from Tarsus and Adana might point to production in Cilicia.

[23] Cf. H. E. Stier, "Probleme der frühgriechischen Geschichte und Kultur", *Historia* I (1950) 216–218 for discussion. The whole question of Greek interaction with the Levant is being dealt with currently in the PhD dissertation of P. R. Helms for the University of Pennsylvania—to whom I am indebted for the above reference.

[24] Cf. L. Basch, "Phoenician Oared Ships", *Mariner's Minor* 55/2 (1969), 139–162, for which reference I thank S. Waxman, Hebrew University, Jerusalem.

[25] K. De Vries in G. F. Bass, *A History of Seafaring*, New York, 1972, pp. 41–43 and 55, and Pls. 3 and 4 and Text figs. 3 and 4; Lionel Casson, *Ships and Seamanship in the Ancient World*, Princeton, 1971, pp. 51–52.

[26] G. F. Bass, *History of Seafaring*, Pl. 7.

[27] A. Paterson, *Assyrian Sculptures, Palace of Sinacherib*, The Hague, 1915, Pls. 10, 11, illustrated in Bass, *History of Seafaring*, Text fig. 14.

[28] Illustrated in Bass, *History of Seafaring*, Pl. 9. The Til Barsib ship, too, has the ram at the end, mast and rigging lines, and a similar single helmsman occupying the rear platform. DeVries notes aptly that since the Assyrians were no sailors, the ship is likely

not have good ninth century examples to cite, from which differences may be noted; however it may be significant that the comparable representations to the Karatepe ship are all eighth century or later, and that the vessel-type must have been standard for Mediterranean war craft of the period, equally Phoenician and Greek.

We are thus brought to the substantial group of parallels for the Karatepe reliefs from Phoenician sources. As noted by Machteld Mellink when the Karatepe reliefs were first discovered, many elements in them can only be explained as deriving from a Phoenician, rather than a Syrian or Neo-Hittite iconographic tradition.[29] In addition to the ship just discussed, these would include certain details of the female sphinxes, the Bes figures, small palmette plants, chains of bud and lotus, and interlacing volute patterns.

In fact, both the Bes figures and a relief of a woman suckling a youthful male must come via the Phoenicians, in whose art one finds as a major component a heavy complement of themes that are ultimately Egyptian in origin.[30] Mellink noted the appearance of the suckling goddess, for example, on purely Phoenician bowls from Etruria and Cyprus of the mid-seventh century—also with only a single nursing youth, and thus distinct from the one Late Bronze Age example we have from the Levant, the ivory plaque from Ras Shamra, where twin figures suckle symmetrically.[31]

The particular form of the palmette plant—as seen on a sphinx orthostat from the North Gate, and as the central element in a "sacred" tree on reliefs from both Karatepe and Domuztepe (figs. 12 and 26)—is a characteristic Phoenician type, with down-curving side volutes and a fan-shaped crest, and may be seen on innumerable works in ivory and metal (for example, fig. 13).[32] The garland of alternating lotus buds

---

to be Phoenician (in Bass, *A History of Seafaring*, p. 43), and in the controversy over which 8th century Assyrian king or governor is responsible for the Til Barsib paintings, since this is a warship, one wonders if it might not be Sargon, as he was the first Assyrian king to be involved in actual sea battles (cf. D. D. Luckenbill, *Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylwiz, Vol II*, Chicago 1929 §§ 92, 118).

[29] Mellink, *Bibl. Or.* VII, pp. 141–159.

[30] Orthmann, *USK*, figs. 15e, 15c and 16a; and discussion in R. D. Barnett, *Catalogue of the Nimrud Ivories*, London, 1957, pp. 55ff.

[31] Mellink, *Bibl Or.* VII, p. 144, re *MAAR III*, 1919, Pl. 22f. and Gjerstad, *Op. Arch.* IV (1946) Pl. IV. For Ras Shamra and the second millennium tradition, see W. Ward "La déesse nourricière d'Ugarit", *Syria* 46 (1969), 225–239.

[32] The Domuztepe relief has been published by U. B. Alkım, "The Results of the Recent Excavation at Domuztepe", *Belleten* XVI (1952), figs. 3 and 4 and M. J. Mellink,

and blossoms, which serves as a lower border for an orthostat from
the eastern side of the North Gate entry (fig. 16), is also well-known
from Phoenician contexts, appearing as early as the sarcophagus of
Ahiram, attributed to the tenth century B.C. (fig. 17).[33] This motif is
most common in the Phoenician repertoire, although its distribution
is not limited to works from that region, as the design is also found on
a North Syrian ivory of the eighth century which is part of a group
from Nimrud attributed to Sam'al.[34] The elaborate volute interlace
that divides another orthostat from the North Gate entry (fig. 15)[35] *is*
restricted to Phoenician work, however, and is a decorative embellish-
ment of the volutes of the sacred tree. It is a late debasement of the
abbreviated volute motif, as for example on an ivory from Samaria;[36]
for the interlace itself, we have no evidence at all before Phoenician and
subsequent orientalizing works of the early seventh century. Mellink
has noted the pattern on some of the silver strips from the Bernardini
Tomb;[37] it occurs also on the Etruscan orientalizing ivory arms from
the Barberini Tomb and the pyxis from Chiusi, and on the heavily
Phoenician gold work from La Aliseda in Spain.[38]

An equally characteristic Phoenician element is to be found as a
detail on the banquet orthostat of group (A) from the South Gate
entry, on which the vertical support beneath the table is in the form of
symmetrically drooping palm-fronds on a low central stalk (cf. detail,
fig. 18). This is a shape known to us from many actual examples
in ivory which were originally parts of furniture inlay or support,
although none has been found in context. They come from among

---

"Archaeology in Asia Minor", *AJA* 60 (1956), Pl. 121, fig. 9. The Karatepe relief is cited
by Mellink in the same article, pp. 376–7. For this type of palmette as a criterion for the
Phoenician style, cf. Winter, "Phoenician and North Syrian Ivory Carving in Historical
Context: Questions of Style and Distribution", *Iraq* 38 (1976), 6. Both Mellink amd
Alkım have noted the closeness of the palmette at the top of the sacred tree to that
under the chin of the relief sphinx. The Karatepe relief that is a virtually identical
counterpart to the Domuztepe example is currently undergoing reconstruction, and
has been found on the eastern side of the North Gate chamber.

   [33] Orthmann, *USK*, Pl. 17h; E. Porada, "Notes on the Sarcophagus of Ahiram",
JANES 5 (1973), 354–372.
   [34] Mallowan and Herrmann, op. cit. (n. 9), No. 46; and Winter, *MMJ* 11, op. cit.
   [35] Orthmann, *USK*, Pl. 17e.
   [36] J. W. and G. M. Crowfoot, *Samaria-Sebaste II: Early Ivories from Samaria*, London,
1938, Pl. II:2.
   [37] *MAAR* III, Pl. 31f.
   [38] Y. Huls, *Ivoires d'Étrurie*, Brussels, 1953, Pls. XIII and XXVII; A. Blanco Freijeiro,
"Orientalia", *Archivo Español de Arqueología* XXIX (1956) 21.

the assemblages of ivory discovered at Samaria, Arslan Tash, Nimrud, and Carchemish (e.g., fig. 19).[39] I have argued elsewhere for this type being of Phoenician or at least South Syrian work; it is of particular interest to find it so accurately represented as a part of the furniture on the Karatepe relief.[40]

Finally, the stylistic affinities of the female sphinx orthostat and the two portal sphinxes from the North Gate are overwhelmingly Phoenician (cf. figs. 12 and 14). This may be seen in the patterned bib and shoulder ornamentation consistent in Phoenician, as distinct from Syrian, examples, and preserved in ivory carving and on the single relief we have of a winged sphinx in Phoenician style, found at Damascus.[41] Phoenician characteristics may also be seen in the general proportions and in the articulation of the raised wing springing from the belly, as well as in the pattern of alternating blank and diagonally-hatched panels for feathering on the wings.[42]

---

[39] Crowfoot and Crowfoot, *Samaria-Sebaste II*, Pl. XVIII–XX; Thureau-Dangin *et al.*, *Arslan Tash*, Pls. XLIV: 94–96; Mallowan, *Nimrud and its Remains* II, figs. 503, 752 and 580; C. L. Woolley and R. D. Barnett, *Carchemish* III, London, 1957, Pl. 71 f.

[40] A discussion of this and related types will soon be published as "Is there a South Syrian Style of Ivory Carving in the Early First Millennium B.C.?" *Iraq* (forthcoming). The presence of drooping-palm ivories at Arslan Tash along with the "Hazael" inscription suggest that the assemblage—if contemporary with the inscription and the reign of Hazael of Aram/Damascus in the second half of the 9th century—may have been manufactured as early as the 9th century; its *terminus ante quem* at Arslan Tash, I would suggest, should be the reign of Tiglath-pileser III, whose inscriptions have been found at the site, and who annexed Damascus in 732 B.C. At Khorsabad, the pieces most probably derive from Sargon II's sack of Samaria in 722. This may be significant, as it gives a range from the second half of the 9th century to the first half of the 8th for the ivories' manufacture, and thus perhaps also for the reliefs of group (A) on which the furniture support appears.

[41] Orthmann, *USK*, Pls. 15g, 16b and 17i; Mallowan, *Nimrud and its Remains II*, fig. 504; M. Abu-al-Faraj al-Ush *et al.*, *Catalogue du Musée National de Damas*, Damascus, 1969, fig. 15.

[42] Cf. Winter, *Iraq* XXXVIII, esp. pp. 6–8. Again *contra* Ussishkin, who argues for stylistic similarities between the Karatepe and Tell Halaf gateway sphinxes. With this I must strongly disagree. Attributes cited are merely the most basic characteristics of all sphinxes in the round and could describe virtually any example brought forth. Differences, however, are extreme: for example, in the very elongated proportions of the body on the T. H. sphinx, with her relatively short legs; elaborate body markings, including belly hair, flame pattern on the haunches and articulation of the leg joins; and the way in which the wings are laid flat back over the body, as opposed to the raised wings of its counterpart at K. The wings spring from the shoulder, not from the belly, and the feathering of the wings is a combination of scales and tight herringbone segments, rather than the alternating blank and diagonal panels described for K. The hairstyles also differ, the one consisting of multiple corkscrew curls, the other of single chignon-like bunches at either side; and the patterned bib and shoulder decoration

These portal sphinxes inevitably lead to a consideration of the style of the gateway lions at Karatepe. Ussishkin has provided a summary of the development of gateway lions in all of North Syria from the ninth through the seventh century B.C., in an attempt to establish the relative position of the Karatepe figures.[43] He argues that the Karatepe lions do not fall at the later end of the sequence, characterized by a high degree of stylized decoration and tongues retracted inside the mouth. On the other hand, they do not really conform to the heavy, squat proportions of ninth century North Syrian lions, either. With their long legs, the more fluid lines of their bodies, and softer contours in general, they rather seem to relate more to a Phoenician concept of proportion as it can be distinguished from the North Syrian (cf. fig. 20). I would therefore suggest that in this case, the Karatepe lions not be set into the linear sequence of development in North Syria, across the Amanus;[44] and one may rather point to the group of scaraboid seals thought to come from Cilicia, mentioned above, where, in addition to the representations of individuals playing lyres, another frequent motif is a very angular and crude lion, with relatively long legs and even sometimes a "Phoenician" bib.[45] As noted, these seals, despite their crudity, have been found in archaeological contexts at Tarsus and elsewhere that demand a date not earlier than the third quarter of the eighth century; they might thus provide a better model for the Karatepe lions, or at least dispense with the necessity of seeing crude rendering in Cilicia as an exclusively ninth century characteristic.

The seals themselves provide an important link between the Cilician plain and the Phoenician coast, as a large quantity have been found along the Mediterranean littoral.[46] Whether they are actually of Cilician manufacture, or possibly even Phoenician, is not for us to determine here; however the seals, which include other motifs related to those of the Karatepe motifs as well,[47] represent further archaeological evidence for Phoenician-Cilician contact in the eighth/seventh century B.C.—a

---

of the K. sphinx puts her clearly in a "Phoenician" rather than a "Syrian" tradition. In the final analysis, then, I would in no way insist upon stylistic ties between these two creatures.

[43] *AS* XIX, pp. 128–129.

[44] On the Amanus barrier as a cultural and political divide, cf. below.

[45] Buchner and Boardman, *JDAI* 81, Nos. 14, 40, 44, 107b and 137.

[46] Ibid., pp. 59–62.

[47] E.g., ibid., No. 141, which shows two men opposite a tree with a winged sundisc above, parallel to the Domuztepe and Karatepe reliefs cited earlier, fn. 32.

factor which must be taken into account in any evaluation of material from Karatepe.

Clearly, the problem we face with all of the parallels drawn to late Phoenician work is that the sarcophagus of Ahiram is the only Phoenician work we have of undisputed date prior to the eighth century. There simply is no corpus of ninth century material from which we can say: such a motif does not appear in that period and only comes into being in the later phases, or, certain consistent changes occur in the details of motifs from one century to the next. Thus we cannot prove that the eighth and seventh century material cited as parallels to the Karatepe reliefs would not have had ninth century counterparts so far absent in the archaeological record. The same is true for Phrygian art of the ninth century. Therefore, we have not proved conclusively that the Karatepe reliefs, with their various Phoenician and Phrygian elements, could not merely be the earliest known examples of what was an on-going tradition. Nevertheless, the weight of solid parallels to eighth and seventh century material from North Syria and Greece, as well as from Phrygia and Phoenicia—particularly with regard to late orientalizing motifs like the interlace—does suggest a non-accidental clustering of comparative material in the later rather than the earlier portion of the chronological spectrum we are reviewing.

What has further emerged from the foregoing survey is that it is particularly in the stylistic features of group (B) (proportions, rendering of hair, etc.), that we see the strongest component of later elements; while it is the particular physiognomy seen on the group (A) reliefs that makes them so difficult to separate from known ninth-century works.

Now, as mentioned above, the general heterogeneity of the two groups was noticed immediately by Çambel and followed by Mellink, as were consistent differences in the dimensions of the slabs, and the apparently haphazard order of their installation.[48] Yet because of the fact that there appeared to be only one major building phase at Karatepe, and because of the presence of unfinished slabs, it was argued that the two groups had to be contemporary.[49] However, when one returns to

---

[48] H. Çambel, "Karatepe Heykeltıraşlık Eserleri Hakkında Bazi Mulahazalar", *Belleten* XIII (1949) 35–6 (English summary); Mellink, *Bibl. Or.* VII, p. 144.

[49] Çambel, in *Karatepe Kazıları*, p. 57; *Belleten XIII*, pp. 35–36; *Oriens I*, pp. 151–152, 157. The inscriptions were added after the blocks were in place, as there are a number of occasions when the orthostats containing the Hieroglyphic text were not sufficiently large, signs then spilling over onto adjacent relief slabs—cf. *Kar. Kaz.*, figs. 67 (banquet, Group (B)); 71 (4-winged genius (A) and large Bes (A?)); 80 (goat-bearer (A)); and 84

the original site reports, it will be noted that *only* reliefs of group (B) are unfinished (fig. 21).[50] Could it be, therefore, that we *are*, after all, dealing with two chronologically distinct sets of orthostats?[51]

I feel the answer to this question lies in a re-examination of the material from the site of Domuztepe across the river—a site only partially explored, and to date often ignored in discussions of the more extensive finds from Karatepe.

II. *Domuztepe and the Archaeological Evidence*

Domuztepe is situated on the east bank of the Ceyhan, opposite and slightly to the southeast of Karatepe across the river (see fig. 1). Like Karatepe, it too is set on a natural hill. The site had been observed in 1946, on the first visit to Karatepe, but was not itself investigated

---

(sphinx (B)). Note that reliefs of *both* groups contain text; therefore they were all set in place before the text was carved. The sequence of the HL inscription on the North Gate is further not continuous: it jumps around three corners of the inner Gate Chamber, thence to the Entrance Passage and back to the Chamber (for a diagram locating inscriptions in relation to the reliefs, cf. H. Th. Bossert, "Die Phön.-Hethitischen Bilinguen von Karatepe: 5. Fortsetzung", *JKF II* (1952–54), 304–5, and J. D. Hawkins, "Karatepe" to be published in *RLA, V*). No satisfactory explanation for this discontinuity has yet been offered. Whether it represents a disordered initial installation of some pre-carved slabs by non-literate builders or a subsequent shifting within the Gate Chamber only further architectural or stratigraphic data will determine. Although the latter alternative would necessitate at least two phases within the Chamber, still, as noted, *both* sets of reliefs must have been in existence at the time of the original inscribing and installation.

   [50] Çambel, *Karatepe Kazıları*, figs. 83, 86, 93 and 94.
   [51] The general haphazard arrangement of the orthostats at Karatepe finds a good parallel on Tell Halaf in the Palace of Kapara, which has led to similar (and generally accepted) suggestions of a secondary context at the latter site also (cf. Orthmann, *USK*, pp. 119–123 and Mellink, *AJA* 62, p. 439). It is clear nevertheless that some attempt has been made to create parallel themes in the two groups at Karatepe, such as, for example, the two seated figures on either side of the entrance to the South Gate, one in style (A), the other in style (B), suggesting that the earlier reliefs were used as a reference by the later sculptors. It should be noted that Alkım pointed to just such a possibility when he uncovered the "pre-Azatiwatas" levels at Domuztepe, stating that this new information raised new questions concerning the chronological sequence of the sculpture at Karatepe, with its different styles ("The Fifth Season's Work at Karatepe", *Belleten* XIV (1950), 681). Ussishkin also remarked upon the multiple styles, and how this could be interpreted as the re-using of older reliefs together with others newly carved, however he then set aside this problem, as he felt that all of the works seemed to agree with a 9th century date (*AS* XIX, p. 12). In the previous discussion, it will be noted that where I disagree with Ussishkin's stylistic analyses, it is with the portal sculptures and group (B), not with group (A).

until the following year."[52] Immediately on the surface, remains of stone walls, orthostat blocks and some sculptural fragments were found. These were first discussed by Alkım in 1950 in the first major Karatepe publication, and again in an article in 1952, as the result of brief field investigations from 1947–51.[53]

Of the sculpture, it is important to note that none of the pieces has been found *in situ.* With the exception of one of the fragmentary portal lions, found fallen in proximity to what has been termed the "Lion Gate" along the western side of the citadel, all of the pieces were either tumbled down the slope of the hill, or had been reused in a later Roman wall.[54]

Two portal lions were found at the site. They are executed half in the round—identical and clearly meant to be a pair.[55] The animals, with their stocky bodies, short legs, very flat sides, separately-articulated shoulders, narrow ridges for the ruff, open mouths and heart-shaped ears, were rightfully compared by Alkım to ninth century lions, for example, from the Citadel Gate at Zincirli (figs. 22 and 23).[56] In their heavy proportions, short legs, outlined shoulders and barely modelled sides, these lions are quite different from the Karatepe gateway lions as described above (fig. 20); and since each of their characteristics *are* hallmarks of the ninth century style for lion sculpture, they strengthen the argument that the Karatepe lions should be seen as something quite other.

In keeping with the portal lions, a fragment of relief has also been preserved, showing only the rear legs and part of a tail of a lion.[57] Its "curly" claws are strongly reminiscent of early ninth century reliefs from the Herald's Wall at Carchemish, as well as from the Outer Citadel Gate and Torbau Q at Zincirli.[58]

---

[52] Cf. Bossert and Alkım, *Karatepe, Second Preliminary Report*, p. 28, and contour map, *Belleten* XII, Pl. CXVI: fig. 2c.

[53] Bossert *et al.*, *Karatepe Kazıları*, pp. 64–71; and U. B. Alkım, "The Results of Recent Excavations at Domuztepe", *Belleten* XVI (1952), 238–250.

[54] Ibid., pp. 242–248; *Karatepe Kazıları*, p. 67; and U. B. Alkım, "Karatepe: Fourth Campaign", *Belleten* XIV (1950), 656.

[55] *Belleten* XVI, figs. 18, 19, 24 and 25.

[56] Ibid., pp. 246–7; and cf. Orthmann, *USK*, Pl. 61d (= *AiS* III, Pl XLVI). The relief lion can best be compared to the Zincirli double-lion statue base, also of the 9th century (*USK*. Pl. 62a).

[57] *Karatepe Kazıları*, fig. 133 and drawing, fig. l38; *Belleten* XVI, fig. 26.

[58] Orthmann, *USK*. Pl. 26a and e, and Pls. 60b and 62a and b.

A statue base with two bulls in high relief (fig. 24)[59] also finds its closest parallels in the Torbau Q animal for general proportions, the double raised line which demarcates the shoulder, and the extra hemispherical patch at the leg-joint. The herringbone pattern on the tail, squared off at the bottom, and the heavy bodies, are also characteristic of an early date, most like the double-bull base found in the Temple of the Storm God at Carchemish and attributed to Katuwas of the first half of the ninth century (fig. 25), while the double outline of the shoulder again recalls strongly a relief of two bulls opposite a central plant from the Herald's Wall and a double-lion statue base, again both of the ninth century.[60]

A relief fragment of the lower part of a long-robed figure standing on a couchant winged animal was found on the top of the mound, near the ruins of a large building. It is an orthostat, and although little is visible in the published photographs, it finds its closest parallels in the winged sphinxes and lions of the ninth century Citadel Gate at Zincirli.[61] A standing male figure in relief, with spear and "harpé", has been compared by Alkım to eighth century works, but is to my mind closer to ninth century reliefs from Carchemish and Zincirli.[62] Finally, there is the orthostat of two figures opposite a tree, with a winged sun-disc above, mentioned earlier, that has an almost identical twin at Karatepe, and is sufficiently similar to other Karatepe orthostats of group (B), such as a winged griffin-demon below winged sun-disc, as to have been carved by the same hand (figs. 26 and 27).[63]

Now, because Alkım has accepted an eighth century date for Karatepe, he assumed also that the occurrence of a virtually identical orthostat at Domuztepe signalled concurrent occupations at the two sites, while those reliefs and sculptures with more ninth-century characteristics must represent an earlier phase. He suggested that these works corresponded to distinct architectural levels apparent in the excavation that he called Phase A, contemporary with Karatepe; Phase B, then "probably" of the ninth century; and an even earlier Phase C identified

---

[59] *Karatepe Kazıları*, figs. 139–144.

[60] Orthmann, *USK*, Pl. 25e, and Pls. 27c and 32e.

[61] Cf. *Karatepe Kazıları*, figs. 151, 153, 154, 157, as compared to *USK*, Pls. 55c, 59g, 58a.

[62] *Belleten* XVI, p. 243 and figs. 11 and 12, compared to Orthmann, *USK*, Pls. 21c, 30e, 57a–e.

[63] Cf. the two reliefs cited above, as well as one of a four-winged griffin-demon below a winged sun-disc: *Karatepe Kazıları*, fig. 71 (= *USK*, Pl. 15d).

as Late Bronze or Hittite Empire, including monochrome pottery and some walls stratigraphically below the foundations of Phase B walls.[64]

In only one place is the so-called Phase A said to lie directly upon Phase B. Even from the meagre published photographs, it can be seen that Phase A is represented by a quite small, insubstantial wall and a relatively thin deposit.[65] Phase B, on the other hand, contains major architecture. It has been isolated in two separate locations: a small sounding near the "Lion Gate", made in 1950, and on the citadel, represented by two adjoining buildings.[66] According to Alkım, Phase B is covered by some 75 to 100 cm. of burned debris that signals the violent destruction of the occupation.

Unfortunately, no pottery has been published for Phase A. Only three sherds have been illustrated from Phase B: one, black paint on a white slip, with parallel horizontal bands framing a wavy line; the second, bichrome, with a broad red horizontal band between narrow black lines; the last showing an undulating, very loosely drawn horizontal black line on a buff or white ground.[67] Of the parallels cited for them by Alkım, unfortunately the material from Zincirli and Malatya is of little use, as neither site was excavated with sufficient stratigraphic control to permit fine distinctions in dating. The Zincirli and Malatya pottery, as well as the sherds from Domuztepe, all seem to be of local manufacture but with strong Cypriote influence; however, with no real description of the wares provided, it is difficult to pursue any possible similarities. Among the better-excavated material from Tarsus cited by Alkım, parallels apparently fall in both the Early Iron and Middle Iron periods. This at least gives us a *terminus ante quem* for the pottery as not later than the end of the eighth century B.C. In particular, Hetty Goldman has noted that in the Early Iron Age period at Tarsus, one finds many Cypriote and cyprianizing elements in the pottery, which then continue into the later period.[68] Unfortunately, however, with the

---

[64] *Belleten* XVI, p. 249.

[65] Cf. *Belleten* XVI, figs. 16, 17 and 31; Alkim notes, p. 245, that he has found mixed Roman, Hellenistic and Iron-Age sherds *below* these walls—so there is no clear evidence that level A is even Iron Age.

[66] Ibid., loc. cit.

[67] Ibid., figs. 33–35.

[68] Cf. F. von Luschan, *Ausgrabungen in Sendschirli V*, Berlin, 1943, Pls. 17a, 18c–h; H. Goldman, *Excavations at Gözlü Kule, Tarsus, Vol. III*, Princeton, 1963, Nos. 326, 378–383, 634, 684; L. Delaporte, "La ville et le pays de Malatia", and "Malatia: Céramique du Hittite récent", *RHA* II (1932–34) 129–154 and 257–285, and Pls. M28:8, M30:13,

chronological division between the Early Iron and Middle Iron phases at Tarsus set at *c.* 850 B.C., material could be ninth century and still be present in either phase. What is more, as David Ussishkin has wisely counselled me (private communication), individual sherds can well be strays, found out of context. Therefore, until more of the Domuztepe pottery is published, it is ill-advised to rely on these three sherds for dating, except, perhaps, as we shall see, as a relative index with regard to Karatepe.

It is thus the sculpture that remains our best indicator of the cultural phases and styles represented at Domuztepe. And what is most important to emphasize in this regard is that, again, no piece assumed to belong to the architectural Phase A, whatever its date may have been, has actually been found in association with that level. Nor has any sculpture of the style of Karatepe group (B) been found at Domuztepe.

Furthermore, it must be noted, in view of the quantity of inscriptional material found at Karatepe, that nothing comparable is apparent at Domuztepe. Alkım twice makes reference to a short hieroglyphic Hittite inscription carved on the bull-base, and to a few signs in very poor state of preservation discovered on a basalt fragment near the base.[69] These were to have been published by Bossert, although to date nothing has appeared. It will of course be extremely important to compare these inscriptions with the hieroglyphic Hittite from Karatepe, to see if there are significant palaeographic or stylistic differences between them; however, it *is* significant that the Domuztepe inscriptions have been cut in relief, generally an early (ninth century) characteristic (private communication from Halet Çambel, gratefully acknowledged), while the Karatepe inscriptions are all in incision and thus presumably later. Furthermore, one is tempted to suggest that since much of the inscriptional material at Karatepe was readily apparent on the surface, the absence of similar abundance at Domuztepe, plus the complete absence there of any Phoenician texts to date, may well be a meaingful distinction between the two sites.

We shall pursue the importance of all of these implications shortly. To return briefly to Karatepe, however, from the fifth season on it became evident that below the buildings associated with Azatiwatas' gates and

---

M31:12. For Cypriote and cyprianizing elements, cf. Goldman, *Tarsus* III, Nos. 318 and 333 (Early Iron), and 529, 560, 587, 593 and 667 (Middle Iron).

[69] Alkım, *Belleten* XIV, pp. 650, note 6 and 655–656; also, *Belleten* XVI, p. 247.

fortification there was evidence of some earlier construction.[70] Although no plans or sections of the lower levels at Karatepe have been published, photographs document a series of cisterns uncovered below and to the west of the North Gate, reportedly containing pottery of "local and Cypriote-like" wares.[71] Similar storage cellars or cisterns were found in the seventh season, sunk into the rock, below the palace on the citadel. Here again, they were reported to have been filled with pottery: one monochrome, probably Late Bronze sherd, and some local, strongly "cyprianizing" Iron Age vessels, as well as a basalt dish similar to others known from Neo-Hittite sites. These cisterns were subsequently filled with trash, as were those at the North Gate.[72]

Although to my knowledge only one fragmentary vessel from these cisterns has been published,[73] the important observation was made that the sherdage was almost identical with the pottery from levels C and B at Domuztepe.

The one published vessel is a black-on-buff (or white-slip), spouted pot with everted rim, the decoration of which has been compared by Alkım to Early Iron Age pottery from Cyprus and Late Bronze pottery from Syria and Palestine.[74] Judging only by the photograph, the Middle Iron fabrics from Tarsus seem in fact closest, although similar groups of hatched lines around the rim and shoulder appear on Early Iron wares as well.[75] Again, this tells us little, but the cisterns do suggest some sort of activity on Karatepe before the building of the citadel gates by Azatiwatas, and apparently this early phase existed parallel to Phase B at Domuztepe. Assuming that Phase B at Domuztepe is indeed ninth century, this should then make the Azatiwatas installation later, and gives us some stratigraphic base at Karatepe itself for the later date of the main occupation.

As far as the construction of the Gates at Karatepe is concerned, it is generally acknowledged that there is but a single building phase in

---

[70] Alkım, *Belleten* XIV, p. 681.

[71] U. B. Alkım, "Onbir mevsimlik Karatepe Kazılarının mimarlık sonuçlarına toplu bir bakış," *V. Turk Tarih Kongresi, Ankara, April 12–17, 1956 (Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınların-dan, IX. Serie, No. 5)*, Ankara, 1960, Pls. XXVII:1 and 2 and XXIX: 5.

[72] U. B. Alkım, "Karatepe: Seventh Campaign", *Belleten* XVI (1952), 622.

[73] Alkım, *V. Turk Tarih Kongresi*, Pl. XXVIII, 3–4. A manuscript on the small finds, including pottery, has been submitted by Muhibbe Darga to the T. T. Kurumu, but has not yet appeared.

[74] Ibid., pp. 75–76.

[75] Cf. *Tarsus III*, Nos. 318, 359, 366–7, 524; also *AiS* V, Pl. 17a.

the Azatiwatas level.[76] Halet Çambel further suggested that the ortho-stats of the Gates were first set in place and then carved, since some damaged blocks were discarded and new examples of the same scene executed, and since a few reliefs were left unfinished in the entrance chamber of the North Gate.[77] As we have noted above, it is important to emphasize that all of the unfinished blocks seem to be of the style of group (B).

To come back to Domuztepe, then, it had been noticed quite early that only limestone outcrops surrounded Karatepe, and that the source of the basalt for the Karatepe reliefs was at Domuztepe.[78] In fact, quarry marks were observed at Domuztepe, and it was assumed that the raw blocks were somehow carried across the river, to be sculpted *in situ*, based upon the observations of Çambel regarding unfinished blocks. The discovery of a relief at Domuztepe with close counterparts at Karatepe was simply taken to mean that parallel occupations had existed on the two hills.

However, when we examine the archaeological evidence as just out-lined, it is apparent that the so-called eighth century level at Domuztepe is really founded on very little evidence. In effect, it is not at all certain that A exists; that it must be eighth century; or that there is actually any evidence for the association of sculpture with the phase. Level B, on the other hand, very definitely exists, including a gateway at the western edge of the mound, architecture, pottery and ninth-century sculpture dated by stylistic comparisons and minor fragments of HH inscriptions. At Karatepe, by contrast, the early level, corresponding to Domuztepe B, consists merely of cisterns cut into bedrock, within which were sherds of both Domuztepe C and B; while the major occupation of the site, which now seems firmly demonstrated to be post-ninth century, is extensive.[79]

---

[76] Cf. above, fn. 49.

[77] *Karatepe Kazıları*, p. 58. Professor Çambel and I have discussed the question of the duplicate blocks. They are both of the (A) group—calf-bearer and warriors. Full discus-sion must await her forthcoming publication; however, since there also exist duplicate Bes reliefs—both used in the installation—I do not feel at this point that damage and duplication necessarily imply carving on the spot.

[78] *Belleten* XIII (1949) 373; *Karatepe Kazıları*, p. 69; and photographs and discussion in Alkım *Belleten* XVI, p. 244 and figs. 13–15a.

[79] By the 11th season, Alkım noted that there seemed to be three architectural levels at Karatepe (cf. *TTK Yayınlarından* IX:5, p. 76), the earliest consisting of post-holes and remains of wood huts (?) directly on virgin rock. He asserts that at one point, under the East tower of the North Gate, after the stone flooring was lifted, it was observed that a

I believe that the key to understanding these apparently different relative sequences lies in the proper determination of the nature of the physical relationship between the two sites. The wide-angle photograph of Karatepe and Domuztepe with the river between, and the contour map of the same area published in 1948 are crucial in this regard (cf. fig. 1).[80] Both sites are situated on natural hills, Karatepe *c.* 225 m, Domuztepe *c.* 180 m above the river level. Although the ninth century gate at Domuztepe is set on the west of the citadel, the slope of the hill running down to the river is extremely steep;[81] while at Karatepe, the North and South Gates are not oriented in any way toward Domuztepe. Rather, the South Gate approach and ramp are directed to the west, away from Domuztepe; and extending down from the south corner of the fortification wall is an added protective wall apparently blocking off the river bank closest to Domuztepe.[82] The Ceyhan River, while it does not appear a formidable barrier between the two sites on the contour map, is in fact a fast-moving stream, fordable only in mid-summer.[83] At the time Karatepe was first discovered in 1946, the party of explorers could not get across to Domuztepe to visit the site. When they did cross in 1947, it was necessary to make a long detour on horseback to find a possible ford to the river.[84] Thus there is not easy access from one site to the other, nor has evidence for fallen blocks, or bases for a slung bridge ever been noted by the excavators on the steep slopes between the two sites.

On these, as well as on archaeological, grounds, therefore, I would question the assumption that the two sites were ever occupied extensively at the same time. Rather, it would seem that the ninth century occupation of Domuztepe, contemporary with the cisterns on Karatepe, was terminated by fire and destruction; and that at some later date, Azatiwatas built his fortification on Karatepe. The direction of my argument must by now be obvious: for it is clear that if the uncarved blocks could have been carried from the Domuztepe side across the river, then carved blocks could also have been transported. The presence

---

piece of wall of level 2 cut through one of the early rock holes, thus confirming the stratigraphic sequence. Unfortunately, nothing further has been published since that time.

[80] U. B. Alkım, "Karatepe Kazısının Arkeolojik Sonuçları", *Belleten* XII (1948) Pl. CXIV: 2a and CXVI: 2c.

[81] Alkım, *Belleten* XIV, Pl. LXVII: 13.

[82] *Belleten* XIV, p. 656 and *Belleten* XII, Pl. CXVII:3.

[83] *Belleten* XIV, Pl. LXVII: 13.

[84] Bossert and Alkım, *Karatepe: Second Preliminary Report*, p. 28.

of orthostats in the style of Karatepe group (A) at Domuztepe would
then reflect not a late occupation, but the original building orthostats,
contemporary with the ninth century lions and bull-base of the major
occupation.

In other words, I would suggest that, for whatever reasons—eco-
nomic or symbolic—group (A) at Karatepe (the group that is stylisti-
cally so close to known ninth-century works) came from a dismantled
Domuztepe, sometime after the destruction of level B. This would
explain why at Domuztepe some blocks found were not *in situ*, but
tumbled down the slope, or else reused in the later Roman wall as
building blocks—discards, or accidents in the transportation process;
and why the re-installation at Karatepe often seems quite haphazard.
Only group (B) at Karatepe would then have been carved as additional
new blocks—interspersed, often apparently quite haphazardly, with the
older blocks, especially inside the Gate chambers. The portal lions and
sphinxes of Karatepe would also have been cut anew (perhaps because
the Domuztepe lions were too heavy to transport?). They were then
all set up in the new gates of Azatiwatas, and his inscriptions added.
The contents of the inscriptions would thus pertain to the historical
situation of the later phase: the post-Domuztepe construction of the
new citadel.[85]

Halet Çambel would argue against this division of the reliefs: first
because she considers it unlikely that so many finished blocks could have
been moved across the river without breakage; and second because of
the way in which individual slabs of both groups seem to have been
carefully fitted onto their bases and to join with neighbouring slabs,
right and left (personal communication). This last would imply, she
feels, contemporary carving as well as installation, to conform with the
particular slopes and placement at Karatepe. Here I would only say that
we must await her final publication of the reliefs, for which drawings
of the inclination and shaping of each block have been prepared.

At that point, one would want to note, for example, if perhaps the
blocks of style (A) have had their borders and decoration more violated

---

[85] In a way, this makes Azatiwatas's closing words regarding the future of his gates
all the more poignant, as he warns against the consequences if anyone wipes out the
name of Azatiwatas from the gate and put his own name, or destroy it in any way (segm.
LIX ff.). Such practices must have occurred in antiquity or there would hardly have
been any need to inveigh against them in standard curse formulae, and this concern
becomes even more germane if, as we have argued, Azatiwatas himself had actually
dismantled Domuztepe.

in the shaping than those of style (B). Such an instance may be observed on the (A) group-relief slab including a band of interlaced volutes, where the left-hand edge has been cut away to accommodate the rear end of the gate lion (cf. fig. 20). In this case, Çambel would argue that it was a unique instance necessitated by the problem of fitting in the large sculpture, but if it were to turn out that in general (A) reliefs showed more secondary fitting, it would indeed support our thesis.

Independent support for the suggestion that the two groups are *not* contemporary may be seen in the fact that the two unfinished blocks at Karatepe are both of the (B) style. Furthermore, it is in Group (B) that one finds the Phrygian vessels and hairstyles so similar to eighth century works that it is impossible to reconcile them with a ninth century date; while the very distinction in content between Groups (A) and (B) at Karatepe—that of basically mythological subjects as opposed to attendants and processions—is precisely that which differentiates ninth- from eighth-century reliefs at Zincirli.

It must be strongly reiterated that we have not eliminated the possibility that two independent work-teams of differing tradition were employed at the same time at Karatepe: one preserving more archaizing, southeast Anatolian traits, the other more eclectic and "modern". However, if one does accept the two non-contemporary sets of reliefs and a shift of major occupation from Domuztepe to Karatepe, the picture is suddenly integrated into an historical process. The relationship between the two sites would then be comparable to other observed situations in the ancient Near East, in which a site is destroyed or abandoned, and instead of being rebuilt, a new location in very close proximity is selected. Such a case may be seen, for example, in the ʿAmuq, where Alalakh, an important centre in the second millennium B.C., was replaced by Tell Tainat, just across the road, in the first.

The foregoing hypothesis is strongly supported by all of the evidence surrounding the destruction level of Phase B at Domuztepe, as well as by the two heterogeneous relief styles at Karatepe, and calls for a post-ninth century date for the construction of the fortress at Karatepe itself. And in recognizing the change in settlement from the east to the west bank of the Ceyhan, we are now in a better position to evaluate in what historical context this shift might best have taken place, and to attempt to reconcile such a context with the situation described in the text of Azatiwatas.

III. *Geographical Factors and the History of Eastern Cilicia*

A. *Geographical Factors*

As noted above, the two sites are situated in the north-eastern foothills
of the roughly triangular Cilician plain (cf. maps, figs. 2, 3). The plain,
caught between the southwest–northeast sweep of the Taurus Mountains
and the more or less north–south line of the Amanus to the east, has
been formed by the southward drainages of the Ceyhan and Seyhan
Rivers. Karatepe and Domuztepe straddle the Ceyhan, just south–east
of the apex of the Cilician triangle. Azatiwatas himself tells us that he
had constructed Karatepe (Azatiwataya), "to be a protection for the
plain of Adana".[86] Important, then, is to determine just what sort of
protection an installation at that particular location would afford.

   Karatepe was first discovered by a team exploring routes through the
Taurus to the Amanus, roads which led from Kayseri on the plateau,
across modern Kozan in upper Cilicia, to the Ceyhan. Perhaps because
so few maps contain indications of topographical features or natural
routes, in the archaeological literature Karatepe has often been assumed
to be strategically placed as a defensive or offensive station guarding
the Amanus passes, and in a position to sustain ties with Zincirli across
the Amanus to the east.[87]

   Now, this *may* have been the case for Domuztepe, on the *east* bank of
the Ceyhan and thus more oriented toward the trans-Amanus routes.
There is a track from Domuztepe via Yarbaşı to the principal Amanus
pass at Bahçe, although it must be stated that the most logical place for
a fortification of the Bahçe pass is just at the north of Bahçeköy itself;

---

[86] H. Donner and W. Röllig, *Kanaanäische und Aramäische Inschriften*, Wiesbaden,
1962–64, no. 26 (this line occurs only in the Phoenician text; the hieroglyphic text of
§§ XLI–XLVII has apparently been lost, though once was at least partially available to
Bossert—information courtesy of J. D. Hawkins).

[87] Ussishkin, for example *(AS* XIX, p. 133), in his discussion of the likelihood of
artistic relations between the two sites, makes a point of mentioning that Zincirli was
situated "merely *c.* 25 miles (38 km.) from Karatepe". However in fact, the distance
between Zincirli and Karatepe, while it may be 38 km as the crow flies, is at least 65
km. by road over the mountains. Alkım, in his extensive studies of the ancient and
modern road systems in Cilicia, has further noted that the Amanus would have served
as a strong natural barrier between Sam'al and the west, despite the fact that there were
accessible passes (cf. U. B. Alkım, "The Road from Sam'al to Asitawandawa: Contribu-
tions to the Historical Geography of the Amanus Region", *Anadolu Araştırmaları* II, 1–2
(1965) 1–41 and esp. pp. 2–3 (= Turkish version in Belleten XXIV (1960) 349–401).

or where the Bahçe and Fevzipaşa routes meet, near Kızıldere; or at Osmaniye, where the main road to Ceyhan, Misis and Adana comes down onto the plain (cf. fig. 2).[88] Only if one were setting up a *string* of fortifications along all possible routes into Cilicia from the Amanus, would a fortification at Domuztepe be strategically useful. But one additional thing is clear: since the Ceyhan does not offer a particularly favourable crossing at that point, and traffic would most probably cross further south, Karatepe on the other side would surely *not* provide a strategic location for control of east-west movements.

That the strategic position of Karatepe is rather determined by north-south routes is clear once one has stood on the site, and is even apparent from the composite wide-angle photograph of Karatepe, Domuztepe and the river published by Alkım and cited above. In fact, Karatepe sits directly on the Akyol, the "White Road", which begins in southern Cilicia, crosses the Ceyhan, then climbs to the foot of the Karatepe mountain, and continues on north via Andırın, through the Meryemcil Pass of the Anti-Taurus, to emerge eventually up on the Anatolian plateau at Göksün in the north (fig. 2).[89] This explains why the site itself is set on the low hill between Karatepe mountain and the Taurus spur, with good visibility both to the road and to the river. The best visibility possible from Karatepe is oriented in a single, northerly direction, toward the Andırın plain. Alkım notes that any north–south travel from Göksün to Cilicia must either take the Meryemcil Pass and continue via Andırın, or else diverge further west through the Bağdaş and Mazdaç passes via Kadirli.[90] He further emphasizes the importance of these north–south routes, citing a parallel in Ottoman times, when the final battles against the Celali rebels were fought in the passes leading to the Göksün highlands.[91]

These northern routes would have been important at any time, but particularly as an alternative route of access to the plateau when traffic through the Cilician Gates or up the north–south Karasu Valley in North Syria was limited for any number of possible reasons; or as a defensive line when the Cilician plain was itself threatened from the

---

[88] Ibid., Map 2. Further, settlement patterns in the Cilician Plain reflect this in the distribution of first millennium sites along the east–west routes, as they follow a quite clear line from Osmaniye to Ceyhan, Misis and Adana (cf. M. V. Seton-Williams, "Cilician Survey", *AS* IV (1954) fig. 5 and p. 136).

[89] Alkım, *Belleten* XIV, pp. 658–659.

[90] U. B. Alkım, "Third Season's Work at Karatepe", *Belleten* XIII (1949) 373.

[91] Alkım, *Belleten* XIV, p. 659.

north. Thus, Azatiwatas' decision to build a stronghold at Karatepe, not rebuild at Domuztepe, should correspond to a time when control of the north–south access was important, and we should stop looking only to periods when tension is recorded in the relations between Cilicia and the East.

Even without the concomitant stylistic and archaeological evidence, therefore, the geographical situation alone should diminish the appeal of a ninth century historical construct which emphasized the relationship between the east and west sides of the Amanus as an explanatory device for the destruction of Karatepe.

On the other hand, it is *very* possible that the historical context Ussishkin and others have sought in the ninth century conflict attested between Sam'al and the Danuna of Cilicia may be preserved across the river. Could Domuztepe have been the ninth century outpost of the Danuna, oriented toward the east (which would account both for the stylistic similarities evident in the sculpture of Domuztepe and Zincirli, and the references in the text of Kilamua of Sam'al, found at Zincirli)?[92] And was the metre-thick destruction of level B at Domuztepe the result of Assyrian campaigns on behalf of Sam'al in Que, as recorded in the Kilamua inscription? Then, at some future date, was the decision made by Azatiwatas to rebuild a fortification in that region, but with sufficiently different strategic priorities that the location of Karatepe on the north-south route of the west bank was considered the more important? Without a careful comparative study of the ceramic assemblages from both sites, these questions cannot be conclusively answered, but this particular historical reconstruction seems to fit the stylistic, archaeological data best, at the same time taking the geographic shift across the Ceyhan into account. It may also help to reduce the historical possibilities of just when such a move would have been most likely.

B. *The Phoenician Component*

Before we proceed to a consideration of absolute historical context, however, there is yet another body of data, tied in a way to the geographical situation described just above, which argues for the chronological divi-

---

[92] Cf. Ussishkin, *AS* XIX, pp. 124, 137, and Donner-Röllig, *KAI*, no. 24.

sion and the relatively late date of Karatepe on the north-south route: that is, the evidence for the Phoenician presence at the site.

One of the arguments frequently brought forth in support of a ninth century date is the use of Phoenician as one of the two languages on Azatiwatas' inscription. The precedent cited is that of Kilamua's ninth century text found at Zincirli just across the Amanus passes, where despite a presumed Aramaean population from the second half of the tenth century on, the inscription itself was written in Phoenician—supposedly because the Aramaeans did not yet have a written language.[93] By the beginning of the eighth century, however, with the inscription of Panammu I of Sam'al already in Aramaic,[94] it is assumed that a parallel aramaicization should have taken place at Karatepe as well, thereby precluding a later date for that text.

Yet even these assumptions have been challenged by Albright, who took issue with the *parti-pris* that Aramaic was not put into writing before 800 B.C., citing the Hazael inscription from Arslan Tash, the Bar-Hadad inscription found near Aleppo and the Tell Halaf votive altar—all of which can be argued to be ninth century.[95] The implication

---

[93] Cf. B. Landsberger, *Sam'al*, Istanbul, 1947, p. 42; H. Frankfort, *Art and Architecture of the Ancient Orient*, 4th edition, Baltimore, 1970, p. 164; and discussion by Ussishkin, *AS* XIX, p. 123.

[94] Donner-Röllig, *KAI*, no. 214.

[95] W. F. Albright, "Northeast Mediterranean Dark Ages and the Early Iron Age Art of Syria", in *The Aegean and the Near East: Studies presented to Hetty Goldman*, S. Weinberg, ed., Locust Valley, 1956, pp. 146–7.

[95a] Could it even be speculated that since Que and Sam'al were united in a coalition against Assyria in 858, *this* marks the time when Domuztepe was thriving and stylistic parallels in the portal lions of Domuztepe with those of Zincirli were so strong? At that time, as discussed by W. W. Hallo ("From Qarqar to Carchemish", *Bibl. Arch.* 23 (1960), 38), the northern coalition was specifically disputing Shalmaneser III's march toward Cilicia and his control of the strategic routes into Asia Minor. Some time after that would be when Kilamua changed sides and "hired" the king of Assyria against the Danuna (presumably the same peoples as those mentioned in Azatiwatas' text). Could the use of Phoenician in Kilamua's inscription be therefore less a reflection of the fact that Aramaean was not yet written than of Sam'al's previous ties to Que, where as we have seen from the reliefs of group (A), elements of Phoenician influence were already apparent and attest to Phoenician activity in Cilicia by that time?

[95b] Jonas Greenfield further argues (in the H. L. Ginsburg Festschrift, *Eretz Israel* 14 (1978) 74–77, in Hebrew, that even the imagery in the text (such as § XXII (called by Greenfield I, 16–17), re putting the enemy under the feet of Azatiwatas) has parallels in the egyptianizing iconography of Phoenician art.

[95c] This notwithstanding, there certainly is apparent parallel phrasing in the Kilamua and Azatiwatas inscriptions, as Ussishkin has pointed out; however, in fact, similar parallelism can also be noted between the Karatepe text and that of Ahiram of Byblos, dated to *c.* 1000 (cf. K. Galling, "Die Achiram-Inschrift im Lichte der Karatepe-texte",

is therefore that if Kilamua was writing in Phoenician, he had to have a reason for it, albeit not yet fully understood.[95a] And as far as seeing the Kilamua and Azatiwatas texts as parallel phenomena is concerned, it must be emphasized that whereas at Zincirli/Sam'al the use of the Phoenician language is an isolated instance, at Karatepe it is accompanied by significant indications of artistic influence as well, to which the many details and motifs on the reliefs attest.[95b] This suggests a broader context in which the Phoenician presence was felt, marking a substantial difference between the two sites.[95c]

What is more, although Phoenician elements appear in the reliefs of both groups, (A) and (B), it should be noted that on group (A) examples we find only isolated Phoenician elements—the garland, the interlace, the Phoenician/Greek ship; whereas in group (B) we find more complete and detailed conceptions, such as the very presence of the portal sphinxes (not just portal lions, as at Domuztepe and Zincirli), with their completely Phoenician attributes.[96] Thus one might argue that

---

WO I (1950), 421–424), so that it would seem what is implied is a long-standing tradition in formal or public phraseology, rather than any necessary contemporaneity on the basis of such occurrences.

[96] This leaves us with the problem that some of the Phoenician elements we observed on the reliefs of group (A) are not attested this early elsewhere in the Phoenician repertoire. However, the presence of the bud-and-lotus garland on the sarcophagus of Ahiram leads us to suggest that this may not be a problem. Since the Kilamua inscription found at Zincirli was, after all, written in Phoenician in the 9th century, it should not be impossible to see Phoenician influence in art at the same time, despite our present lack of securely dated material. And if the present construct of an early date for group (A) and the Domuztepe reliefs does prove correct, this will become in fact the first concrete archaeological evidence for Phoenician activity in the northeastern Mediterranean outside of Cyprus at that time, and the first well-dated corpus of artistic motifs (activity perhaps anticipated in the O.T. account of Solomon receiving horses of Que (I Kgs. 10:28, 29; II Chron. I:16–17), as one would assume this trade would to some extent have been undertaken in partnership with and reflect Solomon's close relationship with Phoenicia, as did his sea-ventures to Ophir). It is hoped that further evidence may now become easier to accumulate, as soundings at Tyre itself begin to give us finer chronological distinctions in Phoenician pottery wares (cf. P. Bikai, "The Late Phoenician Pottery Complex and Chronology", *BASOR* 229 (1978), 47–56).

[96a] I would argue against Phoenician craftsmen at Karatepe, however; rather the assimilation by local stone carvers of a number of Phoenician elements. To use but one illustration: on the reliefs of two men opposite a central tree from Domuztepe and Karatepe, the tree consists of stacked volute arms with a palm fan at the top. The arms are separated into independent elements, and the usual palm-fronds are replaced by a complete palmette plant (as described above, p. 121). The palmette in that particular form is a standard Phoenician element, and is usually represented on its own, as an abbreviated form of the tree; but here, in a quite un-Phoenician adaptation, it has been added to crown the top of the larger tree. This suggests that the carver of the blocks was

there has been an increase in the degree of absorption of Phoenician elements from group (A) to group (B), which could correspond to an increase in the intensity of Phoenician relations with Cilicia over the period of time bridged from the main occupation at Domuztepe to the (re)construction at Karatepe.[96a]

That the Phoenicians had a special history of relations with Cilicia is attested by Classical Greek sources, which speak of Phoenician colonies on the eastern part of the Cilician coast,[96b] and is supported further by the distribution of the Cilician seals discussed above, as well as by the presence of Phoenician pottery in increasing percentages at Tarsus from the Middle Iron Period (*c*. 850 B.C.) into the post-Assyrian phase (to *c.* 600).[97]

In other words, whereas in North Syria the use of the Phoenician language may have been a chronologically-limited occurrence, in Cilicia we find the Phoenician inscription certainly not because Aramaean had not yet been introduced, but rather because there are important political and cultural ties between Cilicia and the Phoenician coast from at least the ninth century through the seventh. In fact, there appears never to have been any significant aramaicization of Cilicia, and such population movements as there were into the area of eastern Cilicia, seem to have consisted of Luwians coming in from the west and gradually displacing individuals with predominantly Hurrian names.[98]

The importance of the Amanus barrier must be emphasized here. For, while Cilicia and North Syria, especially Sam'al, could certainly maintain easy communication across the Amanus passes, the two regions have not sustained identical historical developments. And precisely what I would submit is that Cilicia would not have been subject to the same degree of either aramaicization or even subsequent Assyrian "influence"; rather, the major cultural ties were with the Phoenicians, even during the period of Assyrian military incursions through the eighth and early seventh centuries.[99]

---

putting together two different and usually unrelated elements and thus has produced a hybrid that would not be found at the hand of a Phoenician sculptor.

[96b] Cf. Xenophon, *Anabasis*, I:4.

[97] Goldman, *Tarsus III*, p. 110 and sherds, Nos. 651–659 and 670 || pp. 122 and 131 and sherds, Nos. 1058 and 1068–1075.

[98] P. Houwink ten Cate, *The Luwian Population Groups of Lycia and Cilicia Aspera during the Hellenistic Period*, Leiden, 1961, pp. 42–43; Goetze, *JCS* XVI, pp. 53ff.

[99] Seen also in the relative amounts of Phoenician and Assyrian pottery at Tarsus (cf. reference, fn. 97).

The explanation for this separate and special history of relations with Phoenicia lies, I feel, in the nature of the Cilician Plain. As an alluvial fan, rich and fertile in and of itself, it is nevertheless a geological afterthought, caught between the Taurus and the Amanus. It thus has the advantage of easy access to both the Anatolian Plateau and North Syria, while in effect belonging to neither,[99a] and provides at the same time a relatively long stretch of navigable coastline.

What Cilicia offered to the Phoenicians, and to the Greeks as well,[100] therefore, was a virtual back door into the rich mineral deposits of Anatolia, for which the inland routes were controlled by the states of North Syria to the east, and by Phrygia, Tabal *et al.* to the north and west. I have tried to demonstrate elsewhere that access to metal sources in particular were jealously guarded in antiquity.[101] The triangle of the plain, with its mountain boundaries, would have provided a toe-hold for foreign interests, whose basic orientation, like that of Al Mina at the mouth of the Orontes in Syria, would have been out to the sea and not at all toward North Syria.

That there were indeed Phoenician mercantile interests present in Cilicia is suggested by an inscribed cylinder seal purchased in the area.[102] Dupont-Sommer reads the Phoenician as חתם שצרי, "Seal of the Tyrian". Indeed the question that has *not* been posed in connection with the presence of the Phoenician text at Karatepe is not only why it is there, but why it was deemed necessary to present the text in *two* languages. I would submit that this is because the two texts reflect the two main audiences for the information contained therein: i.e., local population and foreign constituency, who would have comprised either the traffic itself or the agents behind the traffic on the north–south

---

[99a] This was true not only of our period. The Romans were careful to distinguish Cilicia from both Cappadocia to the northeast and Syria to the east, and make of it a separate province (cf. L. Franck, "Sources classiques concernant la Cappadoce", *RHA* XXIV (1966), 12 and 19, with reference to Ptolemy V:6, 1 and V:7, 1; and to Strabo XII, 6.1 and XIV, 5.1). The territory was further disputed by Seleucids and Ptolemys as "open territory" because of its ambiguous position (cf. A. H. M. Jones, *The Cities of the Eastern Roman Provinces*, Oxford, 1937, p. 199).

[100] For the Greek penetration of Cilicia, see the discussion in J. Boardman, "Tarsus, Al-Mina and Chronology", *JHS* 85 (1965) 5–15.

[101] Winter, *Iraq* XXXVIII, pp. 21–22; cf. also the reference in H. Tadmor, "Assyria and the West: The Ninth Century and its Aftermath", in *Unity and Diversity*, H. Goedicke and J. M. Roberts, eds., Baltimore, 1975, p. 38.

[102] A. Dupont-Sommer, "Deux nouvelles inscriptions sémitiques trouvées en Cilicie", *JKF* I (1950/51), 43–47.

route upon which Karatepe was situated—the road toward independent access to the metals of the Plateau.[103]

This then provides us with the added perspective needed to attempt to isolate alternatives for an absolute date—both for the construction of Karatepe and for the historical situation described in the text of Azatiwatas. On stylistic and archaeological grounds, it must be post-Domuztepe level B; and on the basis of the geographical position the site occupies and its special relationship to Phoenician tradition, it must be consistent with a period in which not the east-west, but the north-south concerns would have been paramount.

C. *The Text of Azatiwatas and the Assyrian Sources*

In brief, the Phoenician and hieroglyphic Luwian texts identify the author and initiator of the building programme at Karatepe as one Azatiwatas, a ruler in his own right, but clearly also politically dependent upon and a supporter of Awarikus—king of the Danuna in the Phoenician version, king of Adana in the Luwian.[104] Azatiwatas lists the general achievements of his reign to the benefit of the plain and people of Adana, including his specific military and political accomplishments;

---

[103] I would even be willing to speculate that the Phoenician and Greek presences in Cilicia were in relatively distinct spheres: the Greek colonies and settlements located more to the west (Soloi, Tarsus, etc.) and the Phoenicians more to the east (Myriandis, etc.), so that the "Akyol" would have represented the "Phoenician" route, with perhaps other passes more used by the Greeks, or perhaps the Greeks less actively engaged in pursuing resources inland as opposed to receiving them at the coast. While we do not have exact information as to where the Phoenician installations on the coast were situated, it is interesting to note the clustering of sites from Misis south to the coast, as determined in Seton-Williams' survey (cf. above, fn. 88), in conjunction with the fact that the Gulf of Alexandretta was called by Herodotus the "Myriandic Gulf"—after the supposed name of the Phoenician colony in Cilicia. The eastern route up the Cilician plain could then have bypassed Greek strongholds, such as Tarsus, and even bypassed Adana, heading directly north.

[104] Three copies exist of the Phoenician text from Karatepe—one inscribed on a statue fallen from its base inside the North Gate; the other two found one on each side of the North and South Gates, respectively. The two copies of the hieroglyphic Luwian text were inscribed on the opposite sides of each Gate and at the inside corners of the North Gate Chamber—often encroaching on adjacent relief orthostats and along the plinth below the figured blocks, as noted above, fn. 49. The nature of the relationship between Azatiwatas and Awarikus is not without precedent in Cilicia. As pointed out by J. D. Bing ("A History of Cilicia during the Assyrian Period", PhD dissertation, Indiana University, 1969, p. 45), at the time of Shalmaneser III, there is a reference to one Tulli of the city of Tanakun, a vassal of Kate of Que but equally resident in the Cilician plain (cf. *AR* I, § 583).

refers to the filling of the storerooms of the city of Pa'r/Pahar; and then goes on to establish his grand design: the fortification of his borders, including the construction of the Karatepe citadel, which he names Azatiwataya. He then closes with the usual imprecations against the destruction or usurpation of his work.

If we proceed on the assumption, for which we have argued thus far, that it was the destruction of Domuztepe which corresponded to the historical reference in the inscription of Kilamua to his hiring the king of Assyria against the oppressive Danuna,[105] thus placing Kilamua and the burning of level B at Domuztepe somewhere from the campaigns of Shalmaneser III in Cilicia (839, 834, 833 B.C.) to the reign of Adad-nirari III (810–783) who we know played an active role in shaping the political life of the states of North Syria,[106] then the construction of Karatepe would have to have been some time after these dates: close enough in time that the reliefs of group (A) at Domuztepe were sufficiently well-preserved to allow for their reuse, yet with enough distance that significant stylistic changes would have occurred.

The original basis for dating Karatepe to the reign of Tiglath-pileser III, correlating the Awarikus of Azatiwatas with a mention in that king's annals of tribute from Urikki of Que, the Assyrian term for Cilicia, has been challenged primarily on historical grounds: the picture drawn in the Karatepe texts of an independent and powerful ruler in Que cannot be consistent with the Assyrian version of a tribute-payer and thus ruler subservient to Assyria.[107]

Even if one accepts the challenge, however, it does not preclude the period immediately prior to Tiglath-pileser III's re-establishment of Assyrian control in the West. The period just after Shalmaneser III's

---

[105] Cf. above, fn. 92.

[106] Luckenbill, *AR* I, §§ 577, 582, 583; and on the possible fourth campaign of Shalmaneser III to Que, cf. now, A. K. Grayson, "Studies in Neo-Assyrian History: the Ninth Century B.C.", *Bibl. Or.* XXXIII (1976) 141 and note 57. For Adad-nirari III, cf. A. R. Millard and H. Tadmor, "Adad-nirari III in Syria", *Iraq* XXXV (1973) 57–64; H. Tadmor, "The Historical Inscriptions of Adad-nirari III", *Iraq* XXXV (1973) 141–150; and the as yet unpublished stelae in the Maraş Museum (from Pazarcık) and in the Antakya Museum, from the texts of which it is evident that Adad-nirari was involved in establishing the borders between Kummuḫ and Gurgum/Maraş and between Arpad and Luʿash respectively during his reign (cf. references to the Pazarcık stela in J. D. Hawkins, Review of W. Orthmann, *USK*, *ZA* 63 (1974) 309–310, and "Assyrians and Hittites", *Iraq* XXXVI (1974) 74 and 80).

[107] Cf. discussion, Ussishkin, *AS* XIX, p. 122, and since then, Hawkins, *ZA* 63, p. 311.

campaigns in Que[108] might just provide an excellent context for Azati-watas' assertion that he had to help the plain of Adana to prosper, filled the granaries of Pa'r, increased the army, and aided the succession of the heirs of his patron, Awarikus (cf. §§ XIV–XVI). The inscription of Panammu I of Sam'al, dated early in the eighth century, suggests that the North Syrian states were enjoying relative prosperity and independence at the time;[109] and the Zakur stele found at Afis near Aleppo, which records a coalition joining Que with Sam'al and other North Syrian states, further suggests that serious challenges to Que were not coming from the east at that time, consistent with the location of the Karatepe fortification on north-south, not east-west routes.[110] In fact, actually up to 743/740, while Tiglath-pileser III was engaged in campaigns against North Syria, there really is no reason why Que could not have been quite independent.[111]

What is more, while it has been assumed that the status of Que was comparable to that of Sam'al in this period, where the latter state also pays tribute to Assyria, and its kings identify themselves as vassals of Assyria in their own inscriptions,[112] one wonders whether the position of Urikki of Que beyond the Amanus would not rather have been more analogous to that of Hiram of Tyre, Pisiris of Carchemish, Urpalla of Tyana and Zabibe, Queen of the Arabs, all of whom are mentioned in the same tribute list, and who were clearly not all "vassals" of the nature of Panammu II and Bar-rakib of Sam'al, but were paying tribute more probably with the hope of staving off military incursions by Assyria while not yet under any direct political control.[113]

The name of Urikki appears again in a letter found at Nimrud, written probably in 709/708, in which a report of the Assyrian governor

---

[108] Cf. e.g., J. V. Kinnier Wilson, "The Kurba'il Statue of Shalmaneser III", *Iraq* XXIV (1962), p. 96, Pls. 31–34.

[109] Landsberger, *Sam'al*, p. 65, and the text of the inscription, Donner-Röllig, *KAI*, No. 214.

[110] Cf. Donner-Röllig, *KAI*, Vol. II, p. 209 and the comments by A. R. Millard, "Alphabetic Inscriptions on Ivories from Nimrud", *Iraq* XXIV (1962), 43, and in Millard and Tadmor, *Iraq* XXXV, p. 64. On the reading of Zakur, see now A. R. Millard, "Epigraphic notes, Aramaean and Hebrew", *PEQ* 110 (1978), 23.

[111] Cf. H. W. F. Saggs, The Nimrud Letters, 1952—Part II: Relations with the West", *Iraq* XVII (1955) 145.

[112] Luckenbill, *AR* I, §§ 769, 772, 801; Donner-Röllig, *KAI*, Nos. 215, 216, 217.

[113] Cf. on this G. Kestemont, "Le commerce phénicien et l'expansion assyrienne du IXᵉ–VIIᵉ siècle", *Or. Antiquus* II (1972) 143.

of Que to Sargon II is recorded.[114] The letter described how Mita of
Muški had intercepted an embassy of 14 men of Que sent by this Urikki
to the land of Urartu, presumably attempting to contract a political
alliance against the interests of Assyria.[115] The emphasis in the letter
is on relations with Phrygia, however the information the report gives
us regarding Que is also very illuminating. Urikki is apparently the
same individual mentioned by Tiglath-pileser. Under Sargon, despite
the presence of an Assyrian governor, and although Urikki is not called
directly "king", he is still sufficiently independent to be manoeuvering
politically behind the back of Assyria. On this basis, Nadav Na'aman
has suggested that tribute from the king of Que or the presence of
an Assyrian governor in Que may not necessarily signify that Assyria
controlled the entire Cilician plain, and he speculates upon the possi-
bility that the Assyrians held only the coast, while the mountains were
left to local rulers.[116]

   With the aid of this letter, we are left with three distinct periods
within the second half of the eighth century when the independence
of Que and Awarikus' patronage of Azatiwatas could have resulted
in the construction of Karatepe and its texts: (1) just prior to Tiglath-
pileser's receipt of tribute from Urikki, when the Assyrian presence
had not been strong in Que for some time and was therefore not
mentioned in the text; (2) early in the reign of Sargon, when despite
the presence of an Assyrian governor, Urikki/Awarikus was able to
maintain some measure of political independence and when any men-
tion of Assyria in the Karatepe text was perhaps consciously avoided,
just as it is assumed that Assyria was an unmentioned presence in the
Zakur treaty;[117] or (3) after 709/708 and Sargon's reference to Urikki

---

[114] J. N. Postgate, Assyrian Texts and Fragments", *Iraq* XXXV (1973), esp. pp.
21–34.
   [115] Ibid., pp. 22–23, 11.3–9.
   [116] Certainly by the time of Sargon, Que is functioning as an Assyrian province
(Luckenbill, *AR* II, §§ 16, 25), although it should be noted that we are not told where
the Assyrian governor was residing. Na'aman has discussed the question in his article
on "Quwe" in the *Encyclopedia Mikra'it* VII, Jerusalem, 1976, Cols. 89–90, and accord-
ing to Tadmor, a similar situation occurred in Ashdod, where the king and an Assyrian
governor apparently co-existed in Philistia ("Philistia under Assyrian Rule", *Bibl. Arch.*
29 (1966) esp. p. 95).
   [117] Cf. Millard, *Iraq* XXIV, cited in fn. 110. This is apparently confirmed by the
unpublished stele of Adad-nirari III in the Antakya Museum (for which information I
am indebted to J. D. Hawkins).

conspiring to regain power when, as will be noted in the text, what Azatiwatas actually says is that he was "promoted" by Awarikus (§ II), and that subsequently he (Azatiwatas) extended the territory of the plain of Adana and helped (was loyal to) the house and heirs of his lord (§§ V, XIV–XVI). With respect to this last possibility, nothing in the text of Azatiwatas demands that it be written while Awarikus was still alive, but rather his heirs.[118]

Several factors fit nicely with a date around this time, in the later eighth century, for the construction of Karatepe. One is the presence of the Phrygian pitcher and bowl on the attendants relief of group (B) from the South Gate, at a time when the Phrygian ruler, Mita of Muški, is known to have been involved in Cilicia. For, in the Annals, year 7, Sargon tells us that he has captured and looted cities of the land of Que, held "since distant days" by Mita of Muški.[119] The representation of Phrygian objects in the art would then correspond to a time when the historical presence of the Phrygians in Que is attested, and since Mita is said to have held the area for some time, that presence could have been felt and assimilated any time before, say, 710 when Mita is forced to begin making conciliatory gestures to Assyria.[120]

What is more, in his Cylinder Inscription, Sargon related that he not only put the Phrygian to flight, he also "restored the captured fortresses of Que and increased its domains".[121] Now the cities held by Mita were presumably closest to his own territory and therefore in the West, and Sargon's reference therefore is noticeably parallel to that of Azatiwatas claiming new western territories. This has in fact led Bing to suggest that Azatiwatas may well have fought *with* Sargon despite his lack of mention of Assyria.[122]

In addition, the parallel structure of Azatiwatas' phrase, "I smote the strong lands in the West, which former kings had not smitten" (§§ XXV–XXVI), and Sargon's repeated references to Mita, "who had not made his submission to the kings who lived before me",[123] is

---

[118] This was in fact suggested by Lévy, in *La Nouvelle Clio* I–II, cited above, fn. 4.
[119] Luckenbill, *AR* II, § 18.
[120] Cf. discussion by Postgate regarding the Nimrud Letter No. 39 re Mita of Muški and the intercepted delegation of Urikki, esp. pp. 32–33, and earlier by Sidney Smith in the *CAH*, Vol. III, pp. 54–56.
[121] Luckenbill, *AR* II, § 118.
[122] Bing, dissertation (n. 104), p. 67 and pp. 89f.
[123] Luckenbill, *AR* II, § 43.

rather striking, as is Azatiwatas' reference to deportations of captives from the west and the settling of Danuna from the east in their place (§§ XXX–XXXI). The practice of moving subdued peoples from their homes is an old one in the Near East. In the second millennium B.C., we hear of it in a variety of contexts,[124] and it is referred to by virtually all of the Neo-Assyrian kings. However, all of the early deportations, including those mentioned by Assurnasirpal II, refer only to moving individuals from one place to another, generally into Assyria from the outside.[125] The idea of simultaneous de- and re-population was not introduced in Assyria until the reign of Tiglath-pileser III, where not only are captive populations exchanged from one place to another, but also Assyrians are moved into depopulated areas, a practice continued by Sargon, for example, at Carchemish.[126] This is of course exactly what Azatiwatas does, moving subdued peoples from the west to the east, and settling Danunites in their place. The practice is clearly a development from the earlier and simpler one. In Assyria, it coincided logically with the other administrative innovations of Tiglath-pileser III which at the same time strove to de-pressurize local pockets of resistance and also tie in the conquered territories as functioning parts of the Empire. In such a case, it would not be inappropriately "Assyro-centric" to suppose that the practice would have developed first within the Assyrian complex as part of the overall accommodation to a large-scale territorial Empire; and that surrounding territories would have learned of the feasibility of such a policy through contact with Assyria—perhaps even most probably from Sargon, who pursued the policy to an extent far greater than Tiglath-pileser III, and the presence of whose armies and administrative forces in Cilicia was probably much more extensive as well.

A final factor tying Karatepe to the late eighth century concerns Sargon's account in year 9 (712 B.C.), of his dealings with Ambaris of Tabal, who had been given the land of Hilakku by Sargon and then attempted to seek independent alliances with Mita of Muški and Ursa of Urartu, encroaching the while upon Assyrian-held territory.[127] Now,

---

[124] I am grateful to Nadav Na'aman, Tel Aviv University, for drawing my attention to this point. Cf. especially, S. Ahituv, "New Documents Pertaining to Deportation as a Political System in Ancient Egypt", *Beer-Sheba* I (1973) 87–89 (in Hebrew).

[125] Cf. D. J. Wiseman, "A New Stele of Aššur-naṣir-pal II", *Iraq* XIV (1952), 24–44.

[126] E.g., Luckenbill, *AR* II, § 8. And cf. on this, B. Oded, "Mass Deportation in the Neo-Assyrian Empire—Facts and Figures", *Eretz-Israel* 14, H. L. Ginsburg Festschrift (1978), 62–68 (in Hebrew), + English summary, pp. 124–125.

[127] Ibid., §§ 25,55.

although the precise borders of the kingdom of Tabal are not known in this period, nor the exact extent of Hilakku,[128] it is generally understood that Tabal was located on the other side of the Taurus, to the north of Cilicia, and Hilakku most probably to the northwest. Since we have demonstrated that the geographical position of Karatepe is oriented toward the north–south routes over the Taurus passes, the expansionist activities of Tabal could have been the historical factor which prompted the fortification of those borders into Cilicia.

This same issue—response to military or political incursion from the north—could also connect the construction of Karatepe, as a "protection for the plain of Adana", with the increasing threat of the Cimmerians in Western Asia in the late eighth and early seventh centuries. Although not much is known of these people, it is possible to piece together from various sources the fact that their presence in Anatolia is likely to have been a major factor in the alliance of Phrygia with Assyria under Sargon, and that the Cimmerians continued to exert pressure throughout Anatolia at least through the reign of Assurbanipal.[129] While their activities seem to have been confined to the Plateau, it is not impossible that the Karatepe fortress was built as a protection against their imminent attack.

It is also possible to find other historical contexts in the reigns of the later Assyrian kings, such as Sennacherib and Esarhaddon, consistent with the text of Azatiwatas and the construction of Karatepe. If one proceeds too far into the reign of Sennacherib, it becomes necessary, as Ussishkin has done for the ninth century, to posit the existence of a second Urikki/Awarikus in Que.[130] Nevertheless, for Sennacherib, at

---

[128] Cf on this, Houwink ten Cate, *Luwian Population Groups*, pp. 19–23 and J. D. Hawkins, "Hilakku", in *RLA* IV: 6/7 (1975) pp. 402–403.

[129] P. Naster, *L'Asie Mineure et l'Assyrie...*, Louvain, 1938, pp. 56–7 and 87f. (esp. 98–99). See also *CAH* III (1929), pp. 53, 117 and 188–189, tor a general account of the appearance and activities of the Cimmerians in Asia Minor; and now, M. Cogan and H. Tadmor, "Gyges and Ashurbanipal", *Orientalia* 46 (1977), 65–85 with regard to the later phases, and the eventual destruction of Lydia by the Cimmerians.

[130] *AS* XIX, p. 122. This would not only *not* be impossible; in fact, it is more desirable than putting another Awarikus back into the 9th century, for the pattern in other Neo-Hittite states for the repetition of dynastic names is that they usually follow within one or two generations, as would be the case here, rather than with large gaps of over 100 years (cf. the two Suḫi's at Carchemish—Hawkins, *Iraq* XXXVI, p. 70; the three Halparuntiya's at Maraş/Gurgum—ibid., pp. 73–74; the two Lubarna's of Patina from accounts of Assurnasirpal II and Shalmaneser III, yr. 25—*AR* I, §§ 477, 585; and even the two Panammu's of Sam'al, who are separated by at most 50 years—cf. Donner-Röllig, *KAI*, Nos. 214 and 215.

least, the measure of independence in Cilicia intimated in the text con-
forms with the need for Assyrian campaigns in both Que and Hilakku,
and suggests a context in which the reliefs could have been made.[131]

This would fit in well with the population shifts described by Goetze
in Cilicia in the late eighth–early seventh century.[132] He has shown that
all of the early personal names associated with the region seem to be
Hurrian, and that the Hurrians were gradually eliminated or assimilated
under pressure from the Luwian-speaking peoples, probably of Hilakku,
pressing down into Cilicia around the time of Sennacherib. The Luwian
elements, then, do not become predominant in the population until the
later phases of the Assyrian Empire. Because he espouses an early date
for Karatepe, however, Goetze finds a series of arguments to explain
the anomaly of Azatiwatas' Luwian name and inscription, by suggesting
that he is an outsider, not part of a large resident Luwian population
group. The very evidence used by Goetze—the presence of a short, 10-
word inscription on the socle of two adjoining slabs in the South Gate
chamber at Karatepe which cites two scribes or sculptors with Luwian
names, who have come from the city of Kurupiya to work in the service of
the city of Piyata[133]—need not reflect an early anomaly by their itinerant
presence at all, so much as two artisans, itinerant perhaps but still part
of a larger movement of Luwians into eastern Cilicia at a later date.
If we see Azatiwatas not as part of a Luwian avant-garde, but rather
as a reflection of these late eighth century population movements, then
his inscription in hieroglyphic Luwian finds a good historical niche
anywhere within the period of the late eighth–seventh century.

Finally, although we will discuss this further below, in the context
of possible dates for the destruction of Karatepe, it should be noted

---

[131] Luckenbill, *AR* I, §§ 364 and 383. Mellink also noted that Azatiwatas could have
begun his building activities at Karatepe between 696 and 689, in the reign of Sen-
nacherib (*Bibl. Or.* VII, p. 148), but I would question part of the basis of her evidence in
suggesting that the artists of Karatepe should have been familiar with the reliefs of the
palace of Sennacherib at Nineveh as models for the representation of the Phoenician
ship and other motifs. If anything, Karatepe is particularly devoid of Assyrian artistic
influence, and it is Sennacherib, rather, who draws heavily on visual material from the
West in his art (cf. I. J. Winter, "Art as Evidence of Interaction: Relations between the
Neo-Assyrian Empire and North Syria as seen from the Monuments", in *Mesopotamia
and its Neighbours: Proceedings of the XXVᵉ Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale, Berlin, 1978*,
H. J. Nissen and J. Renger, eds., Berlin (in press)).

[132] Goetze, *JCS* XVI, p. 53.

[133] E. Laroche, "Études sur les hiéroglyphiques Hittites, 7: Une signature d'artistes á
Karatepe", *Syria* 35 (1958) 275–283; Goetze, ibid., p. 53 n. 45.

that Esarhaddon's stated reason for campaigning in Que in 677 was an alliance between the Cilician Sanduarri, king of Kundi and Sissu and Abdi-Milkutti, king of Sidon.[134] Kundi and Sissu have been identified with classical Anazarbus and Sisium (modern Kozan). Kozan in particular functions today as the provincial capital for the smaller towns of northern Cilicia, amongst which is Kadirli, only 12 km to the northwest of Karatepe. It is precisely the sort of location that would fit the requirements as a royal seat for an individual such as Azatiwatas if Karatepe were but a border outpost and fortification, and if Awarikus or his heirs were established at Adana and Pa'r/Pahar (= Misis, Mopsuestia?).[135] Furthermore, the second route described by Alkım through the Taurus, across the passes of Bağdaş and Mazgaç, travels directly through Kundi/Anazarbus, constituting a parallel route to that of the "Akyol" guarded by Karatepe and thus binding the two regions into parallel communication networks.[136]

While it might seem odd for an alliance between a major coastal city of Phoenicia and an inland provincial region in Cilicia, if one thinks of the Phoenician interests in Cilicia as not just coastal trading stations, but as representing active involvement with the traffic along the routes of access to metal resources of the plateau, then the routes from Anazarbus and Kozan to the north would have been of major concern to them, just as the road past Karatepe would have been.[136a]

This account of an alliance between Phoenicia and Cilicia actually provides an ideal context for the situation at Karatepe: an independent phase in the history of northeastern Cilicia, when the north–south routes were of prime importance; and the clear attestation of Phoenician involvement in the area to complement the presence of Phoenician

---

[134] R. Borger, *Die Inschriften Asarhaddons Königs von Assyrien* [*AfO* Beiheft 9], Graz, 1956, pp. 49–50, § 27: A. III 20–38.

[135] H. Th. Bossert, "Die Phönizisch-Hethitischen Bilinguen vom Karatepe: 3. Fortsetzung", *JKF* I (1950–51) 264–295 and esp. 290–294, re Misis as the most logical site for Pahri, which name was preserved in the Greek name for the mountain chains called today the Jebel Misis/Misis Dağ (= παγρικὰ ᾿όρη).

[136] U. B. Alkım, *Belleten* XIII, p. 373, and "Ein altes Wegenetz im südwestlichen Antitaurus-Gebiet", *JKF* III 2 (1959) 217–223, and Map I; and cf. also, photographs of the passes, *Belleten* XIV, Pls. LXXIV:25 and LXXV:26.

[136a] It is interesting to note in this regard that immediately after the Assyrian action against Sidon, Esarhaddon's Treaty with Ba'alu of Tyre precisely limited Phoenician trade along the coast as not north of Byblos (cf. Borger, *Asarhaddon*, p. 108, § 69: A.III 15–23). It may also be indicative of how restrictive, this treaty was that three years later, Tyre revolted.

elements at the site. Although one would not necessarily expect to find
such political alliances recorded in Assyrian texts unless they posed an
immediate threat to Assyrian interests, this is the only explicit reference
to the relationship so clearly evident from the reliefs and the inscriptions
of Karatepe. One possible earlier intimation of this relationship might
be found in the Cylinder Inscription of Sargon, in which he described
catching the Ionians "in the midst of the sea like fish", thus "quieting"
the land of Que and the city of Tyre.[137] However, while this may imply
a link between the concerns of Phoenicia and Que, it may also simply
be a reference to Ionian pirates menacing the coastline of the eastern
Mediterranean, and the subsequent disturbances caused independently
to the two extremities of Tyre in the south and Que in the north.

   In any event, the question must be raised whether the situation
described by Esarhaddon for Sanduarri, king of Kundi and Sissu, could
fit that of Azatiwatas, a ruler in Cilicia who built Karatepe.[138] Such a
construct would fit historically with the Luwianization of Cilicia toward
the end of the Assyrian Empire as described by Goetze, and with
the presence of the Phoenicians in the region; it also fits the parallels
between some of the Phoenician design elements in the Karatepe reliefs
and the later Phoenician works from Etruria, Cyprus and elsewhere.
One of the unresolved problems in such considerations is an estimation
of the length of the occupation associated with Azatiwatas in Karatepe.

---

[137] Luckenbill, *AR*, 11, § 118; and cf. on this, H. Tadmor, "Azriyau of Yaudi", *Scripta Hierosolymitana* 8 (1961), 269, n. 91. It is Nadav Na'aman who has directed me to the evidence for the fact that the Sargonid reference is not likely to imply political ties between Tyre and Cilicia so much as mutual disturbances from Ionian pirates, citing ND2370 (Saggs, *Iraq* XXV, 76–7) re Ionian raids at the time of Tiglath-pileser III on Tyre, and Sargon Annals 118 as restored by Winckler (Olmstead, *AJSL* XLVII, 266) re Ionians slaughtering men of Que; however, if the Yamnaeans in question are not Ionians but Cypriotes, as will be argued in the Helms dissertation cited above, n. 23, then we shall have to re-evaluate the meaning of this mention.

[138] Although such speculation is far from my own area of expertise (and I am grateful to J. D. Hawkins, H. G. Güterbock and H. Hoffner for helpful suggestions), I wonder whether the name of Azatiwatas might itself be linked with that of Sanduarri. Sanduarri has been generally considered to be a compound formed with the name of the Luwian god Sanda (cf. Laroche, *Les noms des hittites*, nos. 1096–1108 and p. 291). Azatiwatas, on the other hand, most probably combines an element *Aza-* with the god-name *Tiwat-*, "Loved by Tiwats" (cf. Hawkins, Morpurgo Davies and Neumann, *Hittite Hieroglyphs and Luwian*, p. 44). However, the dropping of initial *a-* and the nasalization and rhotacization of dentals are well-established principles which together would fully explain Sanduarri as nothing but a phonetic rendering of the name Azatiwatas (cf. Hawkins, *AS* XXIX (1979), 156, and for the process of "improper encoding", F. M. Fales, "On Aramaic Onomastica in the Neo-Assyrian Period", *Or. Ant.* XVI (1977), 41–68, especially pp. 55, 57–61).

Excavations at the site indicate that we are dealing with but a single phase of construction, terminated by fire.[139] However, unfortunately, no analysis of the material from the site has provided us with any indication of how long or how short that single phase could have been—either in averages for radiocarbon dates of roof-beams from construction as opposed to organic materials such as grains contemporary with the fire, or in the amount of accumulated occupational trash, or in a range of closely datable imported pottery.[140] If, as noted above, the period from Sargon's death in 705 to Sennacherib's campaigns from 696 to 689 was a time in which Azatiwatas could have been free to initiate his building programme at Karatepe, can we allow for the site's almost immediate destruction, e.g. by Sennacherib, thereafter? Or, if, as also noted above, there is no real reason why the citadel could not have been constructed just prior to or early in the reign of Tiglath-pileser III, is it too long to suggest that Karatepe existed for more than fifty years before its destruction? Seventy-five?

In the absence of evidence that would permit the weighing of such alternatives, it must be emphasized that simply because we are dealing with what is called a single building phase, we cannot necessarily assume the construction and destruction of Karatepe within the reign of a single Assyrian king; neither can we preclude the possibility. And therefore, historical contexts for the end of the occupation must be examined independently of the evidence for its construction. At least the apparent violent destruction of the site limits the possibilities to periods when such a place would have been vulnerable to attack from the outside.

Forrer has estimated that Que was probably already an Assyrian "province" by the end of the reign of Tiglath-pileser III, or surely by Shalmaneser V.[141] Against this is the lack of clear evidence for the status of Que with regard to other known Assyrian "provinces" or "vassal states" as intimated above, and the fact that no eponym is listed from Que until well into the seventh century.[142] It is not impossible that

---

[139] Cf., for example, Çambel, *Oriens* I, p. 151.

[140] At Hasanlu, in Northwestern Iran, for example, roof-beams destroyed by fire in the destruction of level IVB average about 200 years older than the charred grain and organic materials found in the same buildings—the one being a reflection of the original construction, the other of the latest moment of occupation (published by MASCA, with 5730 half-life and correction factors, in *Radiocarbon*, March, 1970).

[141] E. Forrer, *Die Provinzeinteilung des assyrischen Reiches*, Leipzig, 1921, pp. 70–71.

[142] Ibid., p. 83: "nach 648". But cf. Hawkins, *Anat. Stud.* 29 p. 155 and n. 13.

Karatepe might have been subject to Assyrian military activity—either at this time, or during the early years of Sargon II, when an Assyrian governor was established in Que (cf. above). Yet there is equally no compelling evidence that Karatepe, set on the north–south routes and off the main Amanus passes, would necessarily have been a significant Assyrian military target, when Que was becoming an Assyrian dependent, or even at the time of Sargon's campaigns against the holdings of Mita of Muški in the western part of the plain.

Cilicia in general was clearly in a certain amount of upheaval during the first ten years or so of Sargon's successor, his son Sennacherib. After his first campaign, Sennacherib records deporting individuals from Que and Hilakku to work on the building of his new capital.[143] Yet we know that this did not mean a cessation of hostilities, for the great campaign to Cilicia, resulting in the destruction of Tarsus, was not until 696, and whatever the nature of Sennacherib's control of Cilicia may have been from that time forth, he still had to return again after quelling the Babylonian rebellion of 689.[144] Since in the later campaign, Sennacherib's route of march included Kummuḫ, Malatya and Maraş, thus coming upon Que from the northeast (where there is a reasonable passage from Maraş to Karatepe), it is quite possible that Assyrian attention was directed at the hills, not the sea coast, at this time. We are therefore provided with a good possibility for the destruction of the site towards the end of the reign of Sennacherib.[145]

---

[143] *AR II*, §§ 364, 383.

[144] N. Na'aman, "Sennacherib's 'Letter to God' on his Campaign to Judah", *BASOR* 214 (1974) 32–33 and n. 36, with regard to Landsberger, *Sam'al*, p. 81f.

[145] U. B. Alkım, "An Ancient Road System in the South-western Anti-Taurus", *Belleten* XXIII (1959) 74–75, regarding the routes between Maraş and Karatepe. It is also possible that not only in Sennacherib's campaigns against Tarsus and the Amanus states, but also in those against Hilakku, Karatepe could have been in the direct line of march. On an inscribed prism (BM 103.000), Sennacherib describes the campaign of one of his generals against Hilakku and the people of Ingirra and Tarsus, who had blocked off the "road of Que", stopping traffic. A great deal of discussion has been devoted to the exact location of the territory of Hilakku (cf. Hawkins, *RLA* IV, pp. 402–3) and likewise the identity of this particular "road of Que" (cf. Bing, dissertation, p. 99 for bibliography). Personally, I find the logic of any pass being able to be called *the* road of Que not convincing, as there were always alternative passes across the Amanus, while it is in the western portion, what today is still called *the* "Cilician Gates", that the route is marked by a single defile (see on this, Houwink ten Cate, *Luwian Population Groups*, p. 25). It is this pass, furthermore, which is best defensible militarily and therefore most able to be blocked by the forces of Tarsus, itself in the west, and Ingirra. Whether Hilakku itself extended the full range of the Taurus to the northeastern edge of the Cilician plain, or whether this part of the mountains was held by Tabal, is not clear—although it is

It must also be considered that threats to the Cilician Plain and to Karatepe were not exclusively posed by the armies of Assyria, although for this there is only inference, not direct historical evidence. Just as it is not at all impossible that the necessity of fortifying the Akyol was occasioned by the presence of Cimmerians in Anatolia—the alien presence which had probably pressed Mita of Muški towards overtures to Assyria in the reign of Sargon and to which his state eventually succumbed in the early years of the seventh century—it is also not impossible that, like Gordion, Karatepe, too, fell to the Cimmerians.

Certainly the most explicit historical context which would fit the situation of Karatepe is provided in Esarhaddon's account of his campaign to the northern part of the Cilician plain in 677 (cf. above), in which not only does Esarhaddon proceed against the king of Kundi and Sissu, but also acknowledges a close relationship between Cilicia and the Phoenician king of Sidon. Nevertheless, again, one cannot be certain of the destruction of Karatepe at this time, as it is clear from the Assyrian king's later prayers and omen-texts that he continued to be concerned with Que in subsequent years.[146] And finally, as there are

_____

perhaps not unrelated that in 695, immediately after the battles with Que and Hilakku, Sennacherib's army then moved against Tabal (Luckenbill, *AR* II, §§ 290–292). The personal names that we have from Hilakku are certainly Luwian (Goetze, *JCS* XVI, p. 54, n. 49); and the strategic position of Karatepe with regard to the Taurus passes has been discussed above. So that, wherever Illubru, seat of the Hilakkian rebel Kirua, may have been (cf. Landsberger, *Sam'al*, p. 17, n. 35, who thinks it ought to be in the region of Adana!), the question must be raised whether Karatepe could have been caught in that conflagration. On the other hand, it is also not impossible that it was these campaigns against Hilakku that *brought* the Luwian-speaking peoples into eastern Cilicia in the first place, corresponding with the population movements described by Goetze in the late 8th–early 7th century.

[146] J. A. Knudtzon, *Assyrische Gebete*, Leipzig, 1893, nos. 60–63, pp. 166–167, as cited by Bing, dissertation, p. 134. It is also possible that such concerns are reflected directly in the fact that Esarhaddon deemed it necessary to place a stele recording his victory over Egypt and domination of both Egypt and Tyre at Zincirli in 671 (von Luschan, *AiS* IV, Pls. I and III; Borger, *Asarhaddon*, § 65). The question raised is that of the significance of such stelae to the Assyrian rulers. Esarhaddon set at least three at that time: the one in Sam'al, a second at the Nahr-el-Kalb—virtual doorway to Tyre and thus clearly serving as a propagandistic statement of his power, and a third at Anchiale in Western Cilicia, which has never been found. Since Sam'al had no history of disaffection from Assyria, and had actually provided an Eponym in 681 (Forrer, *Provinzeinteilung*, p. 83), it seems rather more likely that—based on the assumption of a propagandistic and message-bearing intent for the stelae—the Zincirli monument was set as a statement beamed over the Amanus; a warning from the starting point of a strategic pass, and at the edge of the area of tight Assyrian control, toward a more problematic region, of what the Assyrian king could do, as had been done to Egypt. That, such a warning might have been necessary, and that Que might not have been entirely bound into the

no guarantees that Karatepe was ultimately destroyed by Assyrians, it should be noted that after the Cimmerian destruction of Sardis in 652 B.C., they tried to push their way into Syria by way of Cilicia and were stopped by Assurbanipal in Que.[146a]

Thus, from the eighth through the seventh centuries, we are confronted with a number of attractive possibilities for both the construction and destruction of Karatepe—none of which can be more than logically posited as not contradicted by the evidence. The following chart summarizes what seem to be the best alternatives:

CONSTRUCTION	DESTRUCTION
DOMUZTEPE:— Late tenth (?)—mid-ninth century, ± contemporary with Zincirli Citadel Gate and Carchemish Herald's Wall.	Likely under Shalmaneser III, 839, 834 or 833 B.C.; to Adad-nirari III (810–783).
KARATEPE:— *From *c*. 830 to early Tiglath-pileser III (*c*. 743–740 B.C.).	Hypothetical military activity by T-p III or Shalmaneser V
early Sargon II.	or early Sargon.
**late Sargon II (post 709/8 B.C.)	Cimmerians in late eighth century. *
*Sennacherib (late eighth century, up to 689 B.C.).	Sennacherib campaigns, esp. 689. *
Esarhaddon (pre-677 B.C.).	Esarhaddon campaigns of 677. **
	Cimmerians in Que, stopped by Assurbanipal after 652.

 * Occasion for which some reasonable evidence beyond mere hypothetical possibility.
** Accumulation of evidence from more than a single sphere.

Empire even after the campaign of 677, may perhaps be reflected in the fact that there are no eponyms from Que until after 648. And again, it would be interesting to know first how Que and Hilakku were defined geographically in the reign of Esarhaddon; that is, how the Amanus flanks were considered, and what territory was included in Esarhaddon's campaigns against the Hilakkians, "a mountain people, who dwelled in the inaccessible mountains near Tabal, evil Hittites", whose 'fortified cities along with their small towns" he robbed, plundered, destroyed and burned (Borger, *Asarhaddon*, p. 51, § 27: A.III 47–55).
[146a] Cf. S. Smith, *CAH* III (1929), pp. 145–6.

In the end, as forewarned, we have not really solved the problem of Karatepe. The range of possibilities for the construction and destruction of Karatepe notwithstanding, however, what emerges clearly is that an early date for all of Karatepe is *not* feasible. Happily, such a view fits well with the palaeographic arguments for the Phoenician script, that have always stood in the way of the early thesis.[147] These seem, rather, to call for a date at least in the eighth century, and are consistent with the rest of the evidence we have assembled. With the introduction of the Domuztepe sequence and the stratigraphy at Karatepe itself into the picture, either all of the material from the fortification level at Karatepe is late, the sculptures indeed done by two very different work-teams, or the preceding, admittedly convoluted explanation for the differences in the two groups allows for the reuse of earlier work as well as new in the building programme of Azatiwatas.[148] For this, we must posit a tenth- or presumably ninth-century construction of Domuztepe level B on the east bank of the Ceyhan, maintaining relations with Zincirli across the Amanus, and eventually succumbing to violent destruction by the early years of the eighth century at the latest. Following upon this, the fortification wall and gates at Karatepe were installed—some time later than the beginning of the eighth century and possibly even into the early years of the seventh—itself to be destroyed, probably no later than the mid-seventh century.

It is important to emphasize how each of the four scholars I have been citing continuously has pointed the way to this general reconstruction of the relative sequences at Domuztepe and Karatepe in some fashion: Halet Çambel, in her early recognition of the discrepancy between the two groups of reliefs at Karatepe; David Ussishkin, in his insistence upon the ninth century aspect of some of the work, even if we did not agree with all of his comparisons and his ultimate explanation for them; Machteld Mellink, in her analysis of the historical context of the reign of Esarhaddon for the end of Karatepe; and U. Bahadır Alkım, in his emphasis on the road systems as an important key to understanding the sites.

---

[147] B. Peckham, *The Development of the Late Phoenician Scripts*, Cambridge, Mass., 1968, p. 115, n. 1. Peckham even noted, p. 117, n. 11, that if the relief's are 9th century, as he cites Barnett as arguing, then still "about a century elapsed before Azatiwatas used the sculptural blocks for his inscription"—and had the foresight to add: "perhaps transporting them from another locality".

[148] A third possibility, briefly mentioned by Alkım, that the earlier level at Karatepe might have been the original context for Azatiwatas (cf. *TTK Yayınlarından, IX. Serie, No. 5*, p. 76), has not been pursued due to lack of published evidence.

There is still much we do not know about both Karatepe and Domuztepe. We await with anticipation the definitive publication of all of the Karatepe reliefs, to see if any evidence will be forthcoming bearing on the hypothesis of two a-synchronic sets of orthostats. We also await the ceramic evidence which could confirm or refute the present historical construct. And we need to know more about the entire region, including the site of Danakaya, mentioned briefly in the report of the seventh season as just 4–5 km southeast of Karatepe,[149] which might even preserve in its modern name the Danuna of Azatiwatas.

In the meantime, as stated, the proposed reconstruction of the historical sequence calls for a post-ninth century date for Karatepe. I personally must confess to a preference late in the reign of Sargon for the construction of the gates: at a time when stylistic parallels between the eighth century reliefs of Zincirli and Sakçagözü with those of group (B) could be accounted for, and when there would have been little threat coming from the East, facilitating this relationship, and the attention on the North making strategic sense out of the shift to the west bank of the Ceyhan; a time, further, when the Phrygian and the Phoenician presence in Cilicia are consistent with details observable on the reliefs, and when the Luwians might be expected to have penetrated this far to the east. I also prefer the period of Esarhaddon for the destruction of the site since historically that Assyrian king's account of activity in northern Cilicia conforms best to what we know on internal grounds from Karatepe.

It is hoped that future publications will lead to greater precision in the weighing of available evidence. As noted at the beginning of the present study, the ultimate determination of the date of Karatepe is important not only for the history of the early first millennium B.C. in the Near East, for establishing the relationship between art history and history in the region of Cilicia, and for the consequences of the date of the inscriptions from an epigraphic and linguistic point of view; it is also important because it attests to the significant role played by the Phoenicians in Cilicia in this period, both economically and cultur-

---

[149] U. B. Alkım, "Karatepe: The Seventh Campaign", *Belleten* XVI (1952) 621. There is therefore no reason to assume that the modern city of Adana is necessarily the ancient site of Adana; it could be a question, rather, of a later transfer of the name, and we should know more about the archaeological sequence evident at modern Adana before assumptions are made.

ally—thus warning against a too-monolithic view from a predominantly Assyrian perspective;[150] and even more important, the study of Karatepe underscores the necessity of a generally "systemic" approach, in which evidence must be sought from all available spheres.

The "problem" of Karatepe still remains. What we hope has been made clear, however, is that ultimately the "solution" will have to be, not merely individual threads twisted into a neat yet structurally unrelated strand, but rather a fabric woven of whole cloth—a mesh of inter-locking threads that must combine historical, linguistic, topographic, archaeological and artistic skeins before the mantle is complete.

Acknowledgments

---

[150] Winter, in Nissen and Renger, *Mesopotamia and its Neighbours* (in press).

Credits for the maps and photographs are as follows:
Fig. 1: Yuval Portugali.
Figs. 2 and 3: Betti Goren.
Figs. 7, 8, 12, 18, 20, 24: courtesy of Halet Çambel, Karatepe Project.
Fig. 9: Vorderasiatische Abteilung, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin.
Fig. 13: courtesy Director of Antiquities, The Cyprus Museum.
Fig. 17: courtesy Professor Edith Porada.
Fig. 19: Trustees, The British Museum.

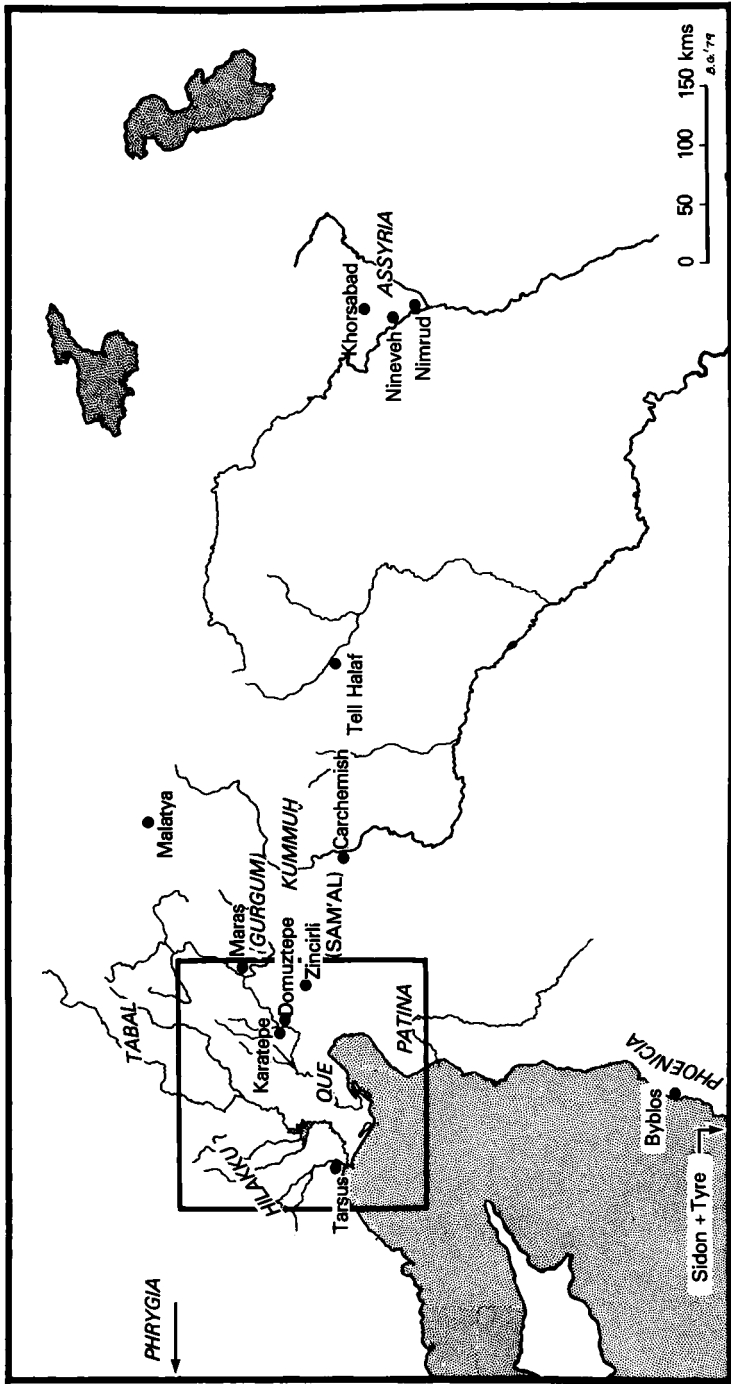Figure 1. Contour Map of Karatepe and Domuztepe, with the Ceyhan River.

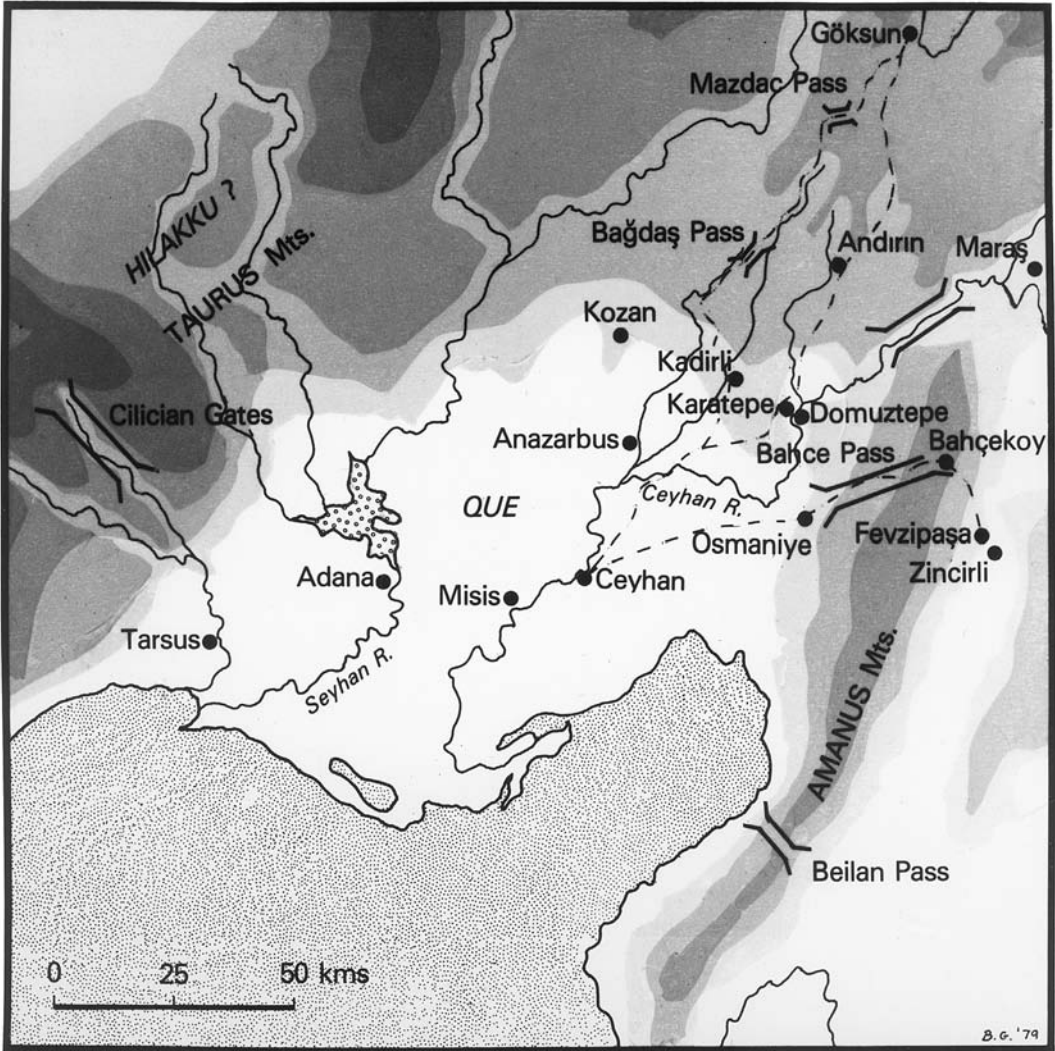Figure 2. General Map of the Ancient Near East.

Figure 3. Detailed Map of the Cilician Plain, Taurus and Amanus.

Figure 4. Banquet Relief (Group (A)) and Attendants Relief (Group (B)),
South Gate.

Figure 5. Copper/bronze spouted
vessel, Tell Halaf.

Figure 6. Goat-bearer Relief, Nord-
hallenbau of Bar Rakib, Zincirli.

Figure 7. Detail, Attendants Relief (B), South Gate.

Figure 8. Chariot Relief (Group (A)),
North Gate.

Figure 9. Hunt Relief, Enclosure Gate,
Sakçagözü.

Figure 10. Ship Relief (Group (A)),
North Gate.

Figure 11. Chariot Relief, Outer Citadel
Gate, Zincirli.

Figure 12. Sphinx Relief (Group (B)). North Gate.

Figure 13. Phoenician-style ivory sphinx, Tomb 79, Salamis.

Figure 14. Sphinx Gate-sculpture (Group (B)), North Gate.

Figure 15. lnterlaced-volute Relief (Group (A)), North Gate.

Figure 16. Bud-and-lotus-chain Relief
(Group (A)), North Gate.

Figure 17. Sarcophagus of
Ahiram, Byblos.

Figure 18. Detail, Banquet Relief (A),
South Gate.

Figure 19. Phoenician or
South-Syrian-style ivory droop-
ing palm plaque, Carchemish.

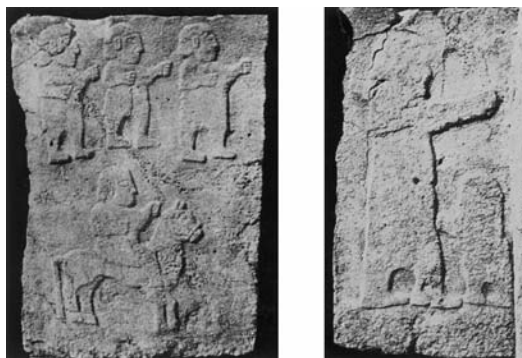Figure 20. Lion Gate-sculpture (Group (B)),
North Gate.

Figure 21. Unfinished Procession Reliefs
(Group (B)), North Gate.

Figure 22. Lion Gate-sculpture, Domuztepe.

Figure 23. Lion Gate-sculpture, Inner Gate (?),
Zincirli.

Figure 24. Double-bull Base, Domuztepe.

Figure 25. Double-bull Base. Temple of the Storm God, Carchemish.

Figure 26. Two-men-opposite-tree Relief, Domuztepe.

Figure 27. Griffin-atlantid Relief (Group (A)), North Gate.

ART AS EVIDENCE FOR INTERACTION:
RELATIONS BETWEEN THE ASSYRIAN EMPIRE
AND NORTH SYRIA

Concurrent with Assyrian political and military expansion from the ninth through the seventh centuries B.C. there developped a complex pattern of cultural exchange, both in materials and in ideas, with the various regions involved. This was particularly true with regard to the West, where in North Syria the Assyrians met a series of well-developed polities—city-states occupying sub-regions within the larger area bounded roughly by the Euphrates and its tributaries on the East, the Syrian desert on the South, the Amanus to the West, and the Taurus to the North. Because of their strategic locations at important crossroads of communication, these states—which included mainly Guzana/Tell Halaf, Carchemish, Bit-Adini, Arpad, Kummuḫ, Marash, Sam'al/Zincirli and Patina (formerly read Hattina)—had behind them a long tradition of mercantile activity and production in art.

The annals of the Neo-Assyrian kings attest to their material interest in the region, noting the desirable raw materials and finished goods available from this direction; while the programs of relief sculpture with which the kings decorated their palaces provide parallel illustrations of the acquisition of booty and tribute.[1]

---

[1] *Cf.* D. D. Luckenbill, Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia, Vol. 1, Chicago 1926, §§ 475–477 (now = A. K. Grayson, Assyrian Royal Inscriptions: 2 [Wiesbaden 1976]), § 584—Assurnasirpal II; AR 1, §§ 585, 593, 601—Shalmaneser III; §§ 769, 772—Tiglath Pileser III; ibid. Vol. II (Chicago 1927), § 45—Sargon II. For representations in relief, cf. E. W. Budge, Assyrian Sculptures in the British Museum: Reign of Ashur-Nasir-Pal, 885–850 B.C. (London 1914), Pl. XX:2; L. W. King, The Bronze Reliefs from the Gates of Shalmaneser III, King of Assyria (London 1915), Pls. XXVIII, XXXII, etc.; A. R. Paterson, Assyrian Sculptures, Palace of Sinacherib (The Hague 1915), Pls. 83–84.

Finished goods were mainly in the form of textiles, ivory and metal-work. In metal and ivory, not only do we have the texts, but also a large accumulation of actual objects found in the Assyrian palaces.[2] Stylistic comparisons between these objects and fixed monuments from North Syria have allowed us to isolate works likely to have come from the region,[3] and even more precisely perhaps, from specific centers within the region, as may be seen in a comparison between an ivory from Room SW37 of Fort Shalmaneser at Nimrud with a relief from the Herald's Wall at Carchemish of the ninth century; or in a second example, of a relief from Zincirli dated to second half of the eighth century, with an ivory from Room SW7 of the Fort.[4]

That the Assyrian kings valued these goods highly is clear from their frequent mention, in particular regarding ivory furniture; and we may assume them to have been used in public display once acquired. Thus, in the garden scene of Assurbanipal, the Assyrian king and his wife are shown using furniture almost identical to pieces being carried off by Sennacherib's soldiers from a captured citadel in an earlier relief.[5]

In addition, it will be seen from the references to North Syrian booty and tribute taken by Assurnasirpal II and Shalmaneser III, that along with finished ivory goods, ivory tusks were acquired from both Carchemish and Patina. These accounts dovetail with actual finds of incised ivory plaques at Nimrud attributed on stylistic grounds to an Assyrian workshop or workshops of the ninth century.[6] Since the long-standing tradition of carving in North Syria goes back at least to the

---

[2] See A. H. Layard, Monuments of Nineveh (London 1849); A Second Series of The Monuments of Nineveh (London 1853); M. E. L. Mallowan, Nimrud and its Remains, Vols. I and II (Aberdeen and New York 1966); G. Loud and C. B. Altman, Khorsabad II (OIP 40) (Chicago 1938).

[3] *Cf.* I. J. Winter, *Phoenician and North Syrian Ivory Carving in Historical Context: Questions of style and distribution*, Iraq 38 (1976), 1–22, with reference to earlier sources.

[4] *Cf.* Mallowan, NR I, fig. 22; W. Orthmann, Untersuchungen zur späthethitischen Kunst (Bonn 1971), Pl. 28b; M. Mallowan and G. Herrmann, Furniture from SW7, Fort Shalmaneser (Ivories from Nimrud [1949–1963], Fascicule III) (Aberdeen 1974), No. 47; W. Orthmann, USK, Pl. 66d. I have argued for the determination of these sub-groups in *Carved Ivory Furniture Panels from Nimrud: A coherent sub-group of the North Syrian style*, Metropolitan Museum Journal 11 (1976), 24–54. Further discussion is included in the unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, *North Syrian in the Early First Millennium B.C.* (Columbia University, New York 1973), Ch. IV

[5] R. D. Barnett, Sculptures from the North Palace of Assurbanipal at Nineveh (668–627 B.C.), (London 1976), Pl. LXIV; Paterson, *loc. cit.* (note 1).

[6] Published by M. Mallowan and L. G. Davies, Ivories in Assyrian Style (Ivories from Nimrud (1949–1963), Fascicule II), (Aberdeen 1970).

third millennium B.C. at Ebla,[7] supplied presumably through Africa or by local herds of elephant reported in later periods from Aleppo to the Ḫabur River basin,[8] we may assume that the Assyrian industry is likely to have been a secondary spin-off from the Syrian. This is not an unusual occurrence: when a highly developed tradition is encountered by a receptive culture, that meeting frequently becomes a spur to local production, as long as raw materials can be made available. But whereas in many cases, the traditions that develop are also stylistically derivative,[9] in the case of Assyria there already was a well-established stylistic tradition that could be applied to the luxury material—albeit never with the same degree of technical expertise evident in the ivories of Syria or Phoenicia.

The accumulation of actual luxury goods—what we would call art—from the West was only one aspect of the interaction between Assyria and North Syria. A parallel, and perhaps even more important, aspect entailed the processing and assimilation of elements associated with the West into a primarily Assyrian context.

This process particularly applies to the tradition of monumental stone sculpture and relief associated with Assyrian palaces—a tradition which seems to have originated in association with the Hittite Empire on the Anatolian Plateau, where the requisite materials were readily available. The Lion Gate from the city wall at Boğazkoi, and the palace entrance at Alaça Hūyūk are certainly the ultimate models for the monumental guardian figures at the entrances to Assyrian royal buildings and the relief slabs decorating walls both inside and out.[10]

Intermediary between them seems to be the equally monumental gateway figures and reliefs associated with the Neo-Hittite states of the early first millennium in North Syria, such as Malatya, Sam'al

---

[7] P. Matthiae, *Ebla nel periodo delle dinastie amorree e della dinastia di Akkad: Scoperte archaeologiche recenti a Tell Mardikh*, Or NS 44 (1975), Pls. XXXVI–XXXVII for wood carvings; a reputed text (unpublished) dealing with the commercial exchange of ivory from the same context has been reported to me by Professor D. I. Owen.

[8] R. D. Barnett, Catalogue of the Nimrud Ivories in the British Museum (London 1957), 163–168.

[9] *Cf.* Iraq 38, Map, fig. 1, which includes the distribution of derived local styles related to North Syrian schools of ivory carving.

[10] *Cf.* K. Bittel, Die Hethiter (München 1976), figs. 94 + 210; E. Akurgal, The Art of the Hittites (New York 1962), figs. 63–67, 88, 90–97. It is the use of stone architectural sculpture that is significant here, and the degree to which it was applied, since specific instances of terra-cotta and painting decoration of palaces in Mesopotamia are well-attested earlier.

and Carchemish.[11] With the work in recent years of J. D. Hawkins, W. Orthmann and D. Ussishkin, among others, we are now in a much better position to date the fixed monuments of North Syria, and to assess their impact in relation to Assyria.[12] It should be stated at the outset, however, that one large gap in our ability to do so comes from our limited knowledge of the Middle Assyrian period, for while it is patently clear that the tradition of monumental architectural sculpture comes to Assyria from the West, what is not clear is whether it had already been transmitted in the second millennium, when the Hittite Empire exercised great political control in North Syria, and buildings such as those at Ain Dara and Alalakh had already incorporated large portal lions.[13]

Nevertheless, I think in the absence of other, conflicting information, we may assume that it was the initial contact of Tukulti-Ninurta II (890–884 B.C.) and his son, Assurnasirpal II (883–859 B.C.), with the states of North Syria in the first millennium[14] that provided the immediate stimulus for the latter's major building program at Nimrud—particularly as it can now be demonstrated that some of the Carchemish, Malatya and probably also Zincirli lions pre-date the construction of Assurnasirpal's palace. Yet it is also clear from the stylistic differences between the Neo-Hittite lions with no mane, open-but-not-tensed mouth, and standing ears that signify the animal merely on the alert (fig. 1), as opposed to the Assyrian lions with full mane, snarling muzzle, and laid-back ears that signal the animal in attack (fig. 2), that what occurred was not a simple take-over, but rather a transformation based

---

[11] E.g. W. Orthmann, USK, Pls. 20–21c, 23–28, 39–42, 55–61. The role of North Syria—particularly Carchemish—as transmitter of the original Hittite tradition was pointed to early by H. G. Güterbock, *Narration in Assyrian Art*, AJA 61 (1957), 66, and is further discussed by T. Madhloom, The Chronology of Neo-Assyrian Art (London 1970), 101.

[12] W. Orthmann, USK, *passim*; D. Ussishkin, *On the Dating of Some Groups of Reliefs from Carchemish and Til Barsib*, AnSt l7 (1967), 181–192 and *Observations on some Monuments from Carchemish*, JNES 26 (1969), 87–92; J. D. Hawkins, *Building Inscriptions of Carchemish, the Long Wall of Sculpture and the Great Staircase*, AnSt 22 (1972), 87–114.

[13] W. Orthmann, USK, Pls. la, 2a; C. L. Woolley, Alalakh, An Account of the Excavations at Tell Atchana in the Hatay, 1937–1949 (London 1955), Pl. XLIX.

[14] *Cf.* on this, H. Tadmor, *Assyria and the West: The Ninth Century and its Aftermath*, in: Unity and Diversity, eds. H. Goedicke and J. M. Roberts (Baltimore 1975), 36–43; as well as W. G. Lambert, *The Reigns of Assurnasirpal II and Shalmaneser III: An Interpretation*, Iraq 36 (1974), 103–109, and A. K. Grayson, *Studies in Neo-Assyrian History: The Ninth Century B.C.*, BiOr 33 (1976), 134–145.

upon Assyrian identification with a long-standing Mesopotamian tradition, combined with their new intentions for the stone gateway figures at palace entrances.[15]

What the Assyrians did, then, was simply to direct their already well-developed skills in relief carving of free-standing objects (for example, the altar of Tukulti-Ninurta I) to dependent architectural elements based on a Hittite or Neo-Hittite model.

Once established, this incorporation of monumental gateway guardians became an integral part of Neo-Assyrian building programs, marking major entrances, as witnessed in Sargon II's palaces at Khorsabad, and reflected in textual references to the power inherent in these colossi.[16] And whereas in Neo-Hittite examples the colossi stood predominantly in the city gates and in a single pair at the main entrance to the palace, the Assyrians elaborated upon this to an unheard-of extent, putting figures, as Sargon said, "facing the four winds of heaven",[17] at virtually every significant portal of the palace, from the main and subsidiary entrances, to the throne room, to passages between room complexes.

It is this fact of non-literal borrowing, of transformation, rather, into an Assyrian idiom, that I should like to be kept in mind; for the gateway animals and relief decoration are not the only architectural features that come to Assyria from the West.

The Assyrians are quite explicit about attributing a particular architectural form, called a *bīt-ḫilāni*, to North Syria. Unfortunately, however, the elusive *bīt-ḫilāni* is easier to acknowledge than to define.[18] References

---

[15] I owe these observations to Mr. A. Safrani, who studied the physiology of the lion in conjunction with a seminar report on Greek orientalizing lions and their antecedents at the Institute of Fine Arts, Spring 1978. Compare, e.g., K. Bittel, *op. cit.*, Pl. 94 with W. E. A. Budge, Assyrian Sculptures in the British Museum. I. Reign of Assurnasirpal 885–860 B.C. (London 1914), Pl. VI. Mention must of course also be made of the major difference in the Assyrian tradition of providing the gate figures with five legs instead of four in order to adhere to the conceptual expectations of purely frontal and profile views.

[16] D. Luckenbill, ARAB II § 693 (= R. Borger, Die Inschriften Asarhaddons, Königs von Assyrien, AfO Bh 9 [1956]): "…the friendly bull-colossi who guard my royal footsteps…"; and *cf.* W. von Soden, *Die Schutzgenien lamassu und schedu in der babylonisch-assyrischen Literatur*, Bagh. Mitt, 3 (1964), 148–156.

[17] ARAB II, § 100. *Cf.* also §§ 73 and 110: "and made all of their (the palace's) entrances bright with them".

[18] Basic studies include: H. Weidhaas, *Der bīt-ḫilāni*, ZA 45 (1939), 108–168; B. Meissner and D. Opitz, Studien zum Bit Hilani im Nordpalast Assurbanaplis zu Ninive (Abh. Preuss. Akad. der Wiss., Jahrg. 1939, Nr. 18, Berlin 1940); B. Meissner, *Das bīt-ḫilāni Assyrien*, Or NS 11 (1942), 251–261; H. Frankfort, *The Origin of the bīt-*

to it occur in Neo-Assyrian texts from the second half of the eighth
century on, in the inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser III (744–727), Sargon
II (722–705), Sennacherib (704–681) and Assurbanipal (668–627), as
well as in several of the Harper Letters from Nineveh and in one text
from Assur.[19] In most cases, the reference is followed by the explana-
tion: *tamšīl ekāl Ḫatti*, "like a palace of the land of Ḫatti", the name by
which sometimes Carchemish and sometimes all of North Syria was
known in the period. On a few occasions, however, reference is made
to a building, *ša ina lišāni Amurru È ḫilāni išassûšu*, "which in the language
of the West is called a *bīt-ḫilāni*".[20]

The references of both Sargon and Sennacherib to the *bīt-ḫilāni* are
immediately followed by a description of the making of column bases
and columns, which led scholars in the nineteenth century to identify
a free-standing building with a columned portico at Khorsabad with
a *bīt-ḫilāni*.[21] The term was then applied to similarly-shaped buildings
with porticos subsequently excavated at Zincirli and elsewhere in North
Syria; and since these were then the "*bīt-ḫilāni* of the West", has led
to the pursuit primarily of columned porticos as the salient feature of
the form in Assyria.[22]

Let us, however, go back to the Assyrian references. Although most
discussions of the *bīt-ḫilāni* excerpt the immediately relevant passages, in
fact, in the most complete texts, those of the Display inscriptions from
Khorsabad, the *bīt-ḫilāni* is mentioned as part of a long sequence: that
is, Sargon founded the city, built temples, and built palaces (plural) of
ivory, maple, boxwood, etc. For these last, he 1) laid the foundations,
2) built the brickwork, 3) roofed them with cedar, 4) set up the gates,
5) constructed a *bīt-ḫilāni* either in or opposite their gates, 6) cast four
double-lion column basis in bronze and set cedar columns upon them,
to support their (plural, relating back to the palaces, not to the singular

---

ḫilāni, Iraq 14 (1952), 120–131) R. Naumann, Architektur Kleinasiens (Tübingen 1955);
J. Renger, *Ḫilāni, bīt A. Neuassyrischen Inschrift*, in: RLA 4/6–7, 405–406; B. Hrouda,
Ḫilāni, bīt B. Archäologisch, RLA 4/6–7, 406–409.

[19] These references were taken from CAD H (Chicago 1956): *ḫilāni*, 184–185. Refer-
ences are to P. Rost 38:2; Lyon, Sar., 23:23 + 10:64; OIP 2, 97:82 + 106:20; Steck,
Asb., 88:l02; ABL 452 + 482; and KAV 42:1:15, 16.

[20] Sargon: D. Luckenbill, ARAB II, § 102 (Pavement Inscription); Sennacherib:
Ibid., § 366.

[21] V. Place, Ninive et l'Assyrie (Paris 1867–70).

[22] E. Koldewey in F. von Luschan, Ausgrabungen in Sendschirli II (Berlin 1898),
136–141 on Hilani I.

ḫilāni?) gates, 7) adorned the gates with protective figures, and 8) added great limestone slabs with scenes of battle as decoration.[23]

In other words, the bīt-ḫilāni is mentioned as part of the attributes of a palace. It seems therefore not to be an isolated structure as described. Furthermore, while the reference to columns may imply association with the bīt-ḫilāni, cited immediately before,[24] such columns may also be associated with the palaces in general.

When we look at the excavated plans of Assyrian palaces with columned porticos in mind, it is clear that they are relatively rare. Columns are occasionally used within the open span of doorways, as in the Palace of Sennacherib at Nineveh, the Southwest Palace of Esarhaddon at Nimrud, and the palace of Assurbanipal at Nineveh.[25] There are, however, few instances of columns marking entrances: e.g., the two columns at the back entrance to Assurbanipal's palace, and the portico connected with Palace F at Khorsabad, as discussed by B. Hrouda (see fig. 3).[26] Yet, in the inscription, Sargon seems to be citing not a single phenomenon, but a standard feature of his palaces; so that the loggia at the back of Palace F, as a unique phenomenon, does not seem to qualify as the exemplar of the bīt-ḫilāni in Neo-Assyrian architecture. We should rather be looking for a major element in the buildings.

One possibility that must be considered is that columns were once a major element in a larger complex within the palaces, but traces of them are no longer to be found. In that case, it is not columns in doorways that we must seek, for aside from the loggia of Palace F, no other doorways at Khorsabad are wide enough to allow for columns, even if the bases themselves had been removed (fig. 4). Rather, it is possible that columns were set out in front of the line of the walls in the rear reception suite, just as a representation on a relief from Assurbanipal's palace at Nineveh would seem to imply, and as reconstructed by H. Weidhaas (cf. figs. 5 and 6).[27] Now, the columns described by Sargon

---

[23] ARAB II, §§ 83–84, 97, 100, 105.

[24] Especially considering ABL 452, a letter to Sargon referring specifically to the preparation of column bases that are to be beneath the pillars of the ḫilānis.

[25] For Esarhaddon's Southwest Palace, Nimrud, cf. the plan in M. Mallowan, NR I, fig. 1; for Assurbanipal's palace at Nineveh, cf. R. D. Barnett, Sculptures from the North Palace, 28, fig. 7.

[26] RLA 4, 409; cf. also G. Loud and C. B. Altman, Khorsabad Part II. The Citadel and the Town (Chicago 1938) = OIP 40, 30–31 on the relative infrequency of the use of columns at Khorsabad.

[27] H. Weidhaas, ZA 45 (1939), 132, fig. 3, with discussion, 130 (= R. D. Barnett, Sculptures from the North Palace, Pl. XXIII: 8, 9, 10). I subsequently discovered

were of cedar, set upon bases of bronze. The wood, as an organic
material, would not be archaeologically preserved, while the bronze
would most likely have been carried off, just as Sargon himself carried
away the great bronze bulls from Musasir after his eighth campaign.[28]
So that if the projected columns were not part of a portico in direct
line with the walls, where empty spaces at least would indicate their
having been in place, we could not expect to find them.

Thus, even if columns were an essential feature of the *būt-ḫilāni*, if
we are to identify the *ḫilāni* in the ground, we must begin to look for
other criteria.

Once we stop looking for columns, other possibilities do arise. Since
Sargon was clearly enumerating what to him were the most salient
aspects of his palaces, if one attempts to determine what were the char-
acteristic features not already elucidated in his list, several candidates
emerge. We are limited of course by the fact that we do not have the
whole structure, so that factors like total height, roofing and multiple
storeys elude us. However, from the preserved plans, in addition to the
scale of the walls, gateways, guardian figures and reliefs, what seems
most characteristic are the spacial complexes: monumental entrances,
courtyards, throne-room suites, and domestic reception wings (cf. full
plan, fig. 7).

Taking these in turn, studies of the Hittite word *ḫilammar* as a pos-
sibly related term have isolated the "gateway" in Hittite tradition.[29]
Through it one passes into the *ḫila-*, or "courtyard", and from there
into the temple or palace. This has been further connected with a
hieroglyphic Luwian sign, attested for the ninth century at Carchem-
ish, which shows an arched gateway with a possible window above.
Apparently this *ḫilammar* can function as a separate gate-house or as
one attached to a courtyard.

While we cannot eliminate this possibility for the identification of
the *būt-ḫilāni*, there are problems. The Assyrian *būt-ḫilāni* definitely does
not equal the independent gatehouse into the city, so characteristic of
Neo-Hittite citadels, because when Sargon discusses the city wall and

---

that G.Turner, *Tell Nebi-Yūnus: The Ekāl-mašarti of Niniveh*, Iraq 32 (1970), 75,
similarly suggested that the b.-ḫ. refers to a portico IN FRONT of certain door-
ways and not to a complete wing in itself.

[28] ARAB II, § 22.

[29] *Cf.* H. Weidhaas, *loc. cit.* 140; and more recently, H. G. Güterbock, *Ḫilammar*, in
RLA 4/6–7, 404–405, and I. Singer, *Hittite ḫilammar and Hieroglyphic Luwian *ḫilani*, ZA
65 (1975), 69–103.

its eight gates, he makes no reference to it.[30] He could of course be refer-
ring to the monumental gate-complex of the palace itself, monumental
sculpture and all, as the *bīt-ḫilāni* of both Sargon and Sennacherib
are mentioned in proximity to gate/door features—in some instances
described as in or by (Akk. *ina*) the gates; in others, opposite or before
them (Akk. *miḫrit*).[31] Thus, certain early scholars sought the *bīt-ḫilāni* in
the main entrance façade (M, M^i and M^ii).[32] The idea is pursued by
I. Singer, who wonders if the very fact of a monumental façade may not
be what the Assyrians took from their experience of Hittite buildings,
without really distinguishing between gateway and palace entry.[33]

That the Assyrian *bīt-ḫilāni* should be the palace gate-house is
weakened, however, by two factors: first, the single reference to the
bīt-ḫilāni by Tiglath-pileser III, which he builds *ana multa'ûtiya*, lit. "for
my leisure"—difficult to understand in terms of a gateway/entrance
façade;[34] and second, one of the Harper letters, ABL 487, written to
Sargon, mentions the preparation of the *bīt-ramāki* for the great *bīt-
ḫilāni*[35]—i.e., a place for washing, a bathroom (as opposed to the more
cultically significant *bīt-rimki*), and as such, not likely to be a major part
of an entrance façade.

Significantly, however, specially paved and appointed rooms of just
this sort are associated with all of the major so-called "*ḫilāni*" at Alalakh
and Zincirli (figs. 8 and 9)—generally a small room for purposes of
washing at the back of the two primary transverse rooms that are a char-
acteristic feature of the building type, as pointed out by H. Frankfort.[36]
Thus, the question must be raised whether even if we are correct in the
association of these buildings found in North Syria with the "palaces
like those of the land of Hatti", we have not wrongly focused on the
columned porticos at the entrance as the most important feature, rather

[30] ARAB II, § 85.
[31] *Cf.* D. G. Lyon, Keilschrifttexte Sargon's, Königs von Assyrien (722–705 v. Chr.)
10:64.
[32] H. Weidhaas, *loc. cit.*, 138–139.
[33] I. Singer, *loc. cit.*, 103. (One thing is clear from ABL 452 cited above: that mention
not only of the column bases but also of large and small lion sculptures associated with
the *bīt-ḫilāni* suggests (monumental) decoration in association with the building type).
[34] P. Rost, Die Keilschrifttexte Tiglat-Pilesers III. (Leipzig 1893), Pl. 38:2; and *cf.* on
this, W. von Soden, AHw II, 686: *muš/lta'û/ītu.*
[35] *Cf.* CAH H: *ḫilānu*, 184–185; L. Waterman, Royal Correspondence of the Assyrian
Empire (Michigan 1929), 343.
[36] H. Frankfort, *The Origin of the Bit Hilani*, Iraq 14 (1952), 123.

than on the arrangements of a monumental façade, public transverse rooms and bathrooms.[37] Such an arrangement is standard in most Neo-Hittite/North Syrian buildings, such as the palace of Kapara at Tell Halaf,[38] and is precisely what characterises the organization of the throne-room complex in the Neo-Assyrian palaces, despite the fact that the order of access to the actual throne room is not identical.

All of the Assyrian throne-rooms face onto a large courtyard. It must at least be considered, therefore, that the *bīt-ḫilāni* complex includes in it the large courtyards which were indeed major features of the Neo-Assyrian palace—a possibility which would accord well with the order mentioned by Sargon, who proceeds from the gates of the *bīt-ḫilāni* set up in or opposite them. However, with bathroom, sometimes columns and sculptural decoration, the court itself could hardly be the *ḫilāni*.

Let us then also consider the possibility that the *bīt-ḫilāni* might more appropriately refer specifically to the rooms associated with public reception accessible from the courtyard. This is not an unsatisfactory solution in that they too, are often set "opposite" an entrance. Like the main entrances, the throne-room façades generally have colossal gateway figures, and are among the primary repositories for interior relief sculpture. Furthermore, their organization into two transverse rooms is comparable to the public suites in North Syrian palaces, and there is sufficient evidence at Khorsabad to infer bathrooms or washing facilities in association with most of the principal throne-rooms.[39]

At Khorsabad, as elsewhere, the throne-room has not one, but three entrances in the main façade.[40] This raises once again the question of columns and their possible alternatives. For, Sennacherib refers not directly to the *bīt-ḫilāni*, but rather, in one version, to a *bīt-appāte*, "like a palace of Hatti, which in the language of the West is called a *bīt-ḫilāni*", and in another variant, *bīt-appāte* is replaced by *bīt-muterrēte*.[41]

Bīt-appāte, while sometimes associated with *aptu*, "window", can also be related to *appu*, "promontory, frontal projection", and even *aptu* is

[37] The idea of the *bīt-ḫilāni* as a complex rather than a facade was first articulated by B. Meissner, Or NS 11 (1942), 261.

[38] *Cf.* plan, in: H. Frankfort, Art and Architecture of the Ancient Orient (4th revised edition) (Baltimore/London 1970), fig. 337.

[39] G. Turner, *The State Apartments of Late Assyrian Palaces*, Iraq 32 (1970), 190–194. See also Oppenheim, Ancient Mesopotamia, 328.

[40] G. Loud, Khorsabad I, OIP 38 (Chicago 1936), fig. 71.

[41] OIP 2 (1924), 97:82 + 106:20.

derived ultimately from the Sumerian word for "opening";[42] while *bīt-muterrēte*, according to W. von Soden, refers to double doors, generally in monumental façades.[43] Both of these terms imply access, as noted quite early by H. Weidhaas and B. Meissner;[44] and it was found that double-door sockets occurred in most entrance façades to the palace temples and major rooms at Khorsabad.[45] Could the columns then be dispensable, after all, or been set out in front on occasion, and a crucial aspect of the *bīt-ḫilāni* be rather the sense of multiple access that several entrances would provide—with the total concept of the *bīt-ḫilāni* referring then to the whole complex of access plus transverse public rooms plus bathroom off a courtyard, marked by a monumental façade?

It is an interesting possibility. For, even though these suites in Assyria are attached portions of a larger structure, in plan they resemble the free-standing "*ḫilāni*" of Tell Halaf and Zincirli (cf. figs. 7–9).[46] And just as at Zincirli the "*ḫilāni*" were sometimes grouped around a central court (fig. 10), in Sennacherib's palace at Nineveh we see three adjacent and almost identical suites of this type organized about a court in the southwest quadrant (fig. 11).[47]

The only problem with this interpretation is that the throne-room suites are not new to eighth century Assyrian architecture. A similar complex occurs in the palace of Assurnasirpal II, and in Fort Shalmaneser.[48] But the question must then be raised whether the ninth century kings simply failed to refer to a *bīt-ḫilāni* in their building inscriptions rather than that this was not the model they had in mind. The same

---

[42] Thus, CAD H: *ḫilānu*, 185, an early volume (1956), translated *bīt-appāte* as a "room with windows", while the later volume A (1968), 183, has left the word in Akkadian.

[43] W. von Soden, AHw, 688: *mutērtu*.

[44] H. Weidhaas, *loc. cit.*, 134–135 and B. Meissner, *loc. cit.*, 254.

[45] OIP 40, 25.

[46] R. Naumann, Architektur Kleinasiens (Tübingen 1955), figs. 553, 567, 569, and the Carchemish "*ḫilāni*" reconstructed in Th. A. Busink, Der Tempel in Jerusalem (Leiden 1970), figs. 153–155.

[47] R. Naumann, *op. cit.* fig. 565, the "Upper Palace". That more than one *bīt-ḫilāni* might be incorporated into a single palace complex is perhaps reflected in ABL 487, referring to the bathroom of the *bīt-ḫilāni dannu*, "the great b-ḫ", possibly suggesting hereby the existence also of lesser ones. Furthermore, in ABL 452, mention is made of the four column bases for the two *bīt-ḫilāni*.

[48] *Cf.* M. E. L. Mallowan, Nimrud and its Remains (London 1975), folding plans III and VIII for the most up-to date plans. In general, *cf.* G. Turner, *The State Apartments of Late Assyrian Palaces*, Iraq 32 (1970), 177–213, esp. 181ff. with regard to the principal reception suites or throne-rooms; and for later variants on the reception suite and its continuity/transmission into Neo-Babylonian and Persian architecture, *cf.* M. Roaf, *The diffusion of the 'Salles à Quatre Saillants'*, Iraq 35 (1973), 83–91.

holds true for the generally-similar throne-room-and-court-complex at
Mari of the early second millennium,[49] which may simply represent an
early example of a long-standing tradition in Syrian palaces, adopted
by the Assyrian kings via North Syria at a later date.[50]

A last alternative for the *bīt-ḫilāni* is the private reception quarters,
of which those at Khorsabad are the best preserved (cf. fig. 4).[51] I wish
the sense of *miḫrit bābēšin*, "opposite" or "before their gates", were more
clear; for in some sense, these quarters are quite literally the furthest
and most opposite the entrance of the palace. The suite of rooms at
Khorsabad is approached by main entrances on three sides.

The only bathroom clearly identified by the excavators at Khorsabad
is contained in this complex as well: Room 12 on the plan.[52] Further-
more, I wonder if we cannot raise some circumstantial evidence with
regard to the sculptural program of the complex.

Room 7 of the private apartments contains an elaborate series
of reliefs depicting the king's hunters in a park (fig. 12), which even
includes a small building with two-columned portico (often wistfully
pointed to as a candidate for the *bīt-ḫilāni*).[53] Since Sargon is so literal
on other occasions in the parallelism of his texts and reality—for
example, describing the bronze and silver bands for the doors of the
temples, corroborated by a reference in a letter to their manufacture,
and further by the actual discovery *in situ* of several bronze doorband
or pole fragments[54]—I should like to suggest that this series of reliefs
in Room 7 be equated with the Display inscription of Room XIV, in
which the king describes a "park like Mount Amanus in which were
set out every tree of the land of Hatti", laid out by the side of Khor-

---

[49] E. Strommenger, Fünf Jahrtausende Mesopotamien (München 1962), 86, fig. 32.

[50] To derive the b-ḫ from a Syrian rather than a Hittite second millennium prototype
is ultimately much more logical. Eytmologically, one wonders whether Hittite *ḫila-* or
ḫilammar must be the source of the word *ḫilāni*, when we now have *ḫln* attested in Ugaritic
at the same time, to indicate an opening in Baal's house (*cf.* P. J. van Zijl, Baal: A Study
of Texts in Connection with Baal in the Ugaritic Epics, AOAT 10 [Neukirchen/Vluyn
1972], 128–30 + 140–141); and architecturally, although there is one building on the
citadel at Boğazkoi that resembles the later North Syrian "ḫilāni" in plan (Bldg. E:
K. Bittel, Die Hethiter, 121, fig. 114), the type does not seem especially characteristic of
Hittite royal architecture in general, and certainly has earlier precedents and a longer
tradition in Syria, e.g. at Alalakh (R. Naumann, *op. cit.*, fig. 542).

[51] OIP 40 (1938), Pl. 76 (Plan).

[52] OIP 38 (1936), 20–24.

[53] *Ibid.*, figs. 83–89, and mention by Weidhaas, *loc. cit.* 142.

[54] OIP 40 (1938), 25 + Pl. 20E; ARAB II, §§ 84, 97; L. Waterman, *op. cit.*, 315
(= ABL 452).

sabad.[55] The trees in the reliefs, tall conifers, are precisely the trees of the Amanus; the river that flows through the scene mirrors the actual River Khosr that flows by Khorsabad. Apart from the description of the *bīt-ḫilāni*, the account of the park is the only reference to Hatti-land (North Syria) in Sargon's inscriptions. It tells us something about the way in which the Assyrians viewed the rich woodlands to the West, and I further wonder if it would not be a particularly appropriate scheme of decoration for a suite of rooms also associated with Syria—i.e., the representation of a park like the Amanus in North Syria, in a building that is itself modelled after a North Syrian palace.

The whole wing of these quarters is described as the best situated on the terrace, looking out toward the mountains and the river—and the most likely place for the park itself to have been set. Room 7 is oriented in such a way that the scene it would have looked out upon would have been echoed in the decorative scheme—evoking the reference of Tiglath-pileser to a *bīt-ḫilāni* which, "for my leisure, in the midst of Kalḫu I built".

It should also be noted that a similar series of reliefs decorates Room H of Assurbanipal's palace at Nineveh: similar trees and park; similar pavilion.[56] To these is added the one representation of an Assyrian palace façade, cited above. J. Reade and R. D. Barnett have suggested this may represent Nineveh, and I would submit that what we have here, as at Khorsabad, is a literal representation of the royal palace and its surrounding park. Thus, what we see depicted in Room H are the two types of columned buildings in use in Assyria at the time: one, the small, free-standing pavilion or kiosk; the other, the elaborate, engaged façade.[57]

The juxtaposition of the two types of columned buildings in the reliefs of Room H lead to two final thoughts on the *bīt-ḫilāni*. First, while I must confess to an intuitive bias toward the throne-room as

---

[55] ARAB II, § 83.

[56] R. D. Barnett, Sculptures from the North Palace, Pl. XXIII: The parallels between these reliefs and the similar series of Sargon have not, I believe, been noted; nor the connection with Sargon's description of the park he himself had built, "like Mount Amanus". It would suggest that, despite the fragmentary state of so many of Sargon's reliefs, there was a significant development evident at Khorsabad toward the increased total-environment/narrative that characterizes the reliefs of later kings.

[57] Furthermore, the room in which these reliefs are set is precisely a long, transverse type, set off from a courtyard in the typical "ḫilāni" format discussed above. As part of a possible reception suite, it is also an appropriate location for a program of decoration representing the royal city and its surroundings.

the *būt-ḫilāni*, it is clear I cannot find the means to select in any defini-
tive way between the various possibilities so far presented. As I was
pursuing the problem, however, I had finally come to wonder whether
perhaps this was because, although the Assyrian kings obviously had
something specific in mind, the underlying principle might have had
multipe applications in Neo-Assyrian architecture, as is the case with the
Hittite *ḫilammar*; that perhaps the characteristic features of the *būt-ḫilāni*
were those listed above: one or more transverse rooms with a major
façade, and with multiple access being a significant component; and
thus, pavilion, throne-room, gate-complex or private suite all possibili-
ties, the key factor being form rather than function. The courtyard,
of course, would not be included here, unless it were tied to one of
the other room complexes. But the idea is appealing—particularly as
the Syrian *būt-ḫilāni* has been discussed in connection with the origin
of the later Parthian, Sassanian and Islamic *īwān*, and the *īwān*, too,
functions in three modes: as a royal reception hall or throne-room; as a
living/private reception room facing onto a courtyard in private houses;
and as a monumental entrance.[58] The parallels seem too close to be
coincidental, and I would simply suggest that the complexity spelled out
here may in part account for the elusiveness of the *būt-ḫilāni* to date.

Second, since both B. Meissner and H. Weidhaas also originally
raised the question of the relationship of *ḫilāni* to Hebrew *ḥalon*,[59] which
has since been strengthened by the appearance of the same word,
ḥln, for the intended opening to Baal's house in the Ugaritic Poem
of Baal,[60] the relationship of the *būt-ḫilāni* to a two- or many-storeyed
building with windows cannot be dismissed. And if that referent is
accurate—consistent with the hieroglyphic Luwian sign for gate-house

---

[58] I am most grateful to Erile Leichty for directing me to this material, via his Master's
Thesis, *The īwān before the Seljuks* (University of Michigan 1957). For a primary study, *cf.*
F. Oelmann, *Hilani und Liwanhaus*, Bonner Jahrbücher CXXVII (1922), 189–236; more
recently, *cf.* the general discussion and bibliography under "Iwan" in the Encyclopedia
of Islam, Vol. IV (Leiden 1974), 287–289, as well as E. J. Keall, *Some Thoughts on the
Early Eyvan*, in: D. K. Kouymjian, ed., Near Eastern Numismatics, Iconography, Epi-
graphy and History: Studies in Honor of George C. Miles (Beirut 1974), 123–130. (It
should also be noted that I. Singer has likewise concluded—ZA 65 (1975), 100f.—that
the reconstructed Hittite *ḫilana* can be connected with every type of monumental
entrance, free-standing or attached).
[59] T. Jacobsen, ZA 45 (1957), 135; B. Meissner, Or. NS 11 (1942), 254.
[60] P. J. van Ziji, Baal. A Study of Texts in Connection with Baal in the Ugaritic
Epics, AOAT 10 (1972), 128f.

which seems to have a window above the arched gate,[61] and with the late second millennium palace of the king of Byblos, as described by Wen Amun, in which the king appears framed against the window on an upper storey[62]—then I fear we may not find the definitive hallmarks of the *bīt-ḫilāni* in the ground-plans of excavated Neo-Assyrian buildings at all.

Nor is it clear whether we can ever expect to find a literal equivalent in Assyria to the presumed "Western" counterpart. Just as motifs may be transferred from one culture to another in a variety of ways: with the original meaning intact; with no meaning, merely as decoration; with change in meaning, but similarity in imagery; or with retention of name and meaning, but changes in form—so architectural forms can undergo changes during the process of transfer, particularly if the borrowing culture's perception of the primary features of the form differ from the perceptions of the original culture. In other words, columns may have been essential in the entrance to a Syrian *bīt-ḫilāni*, but in Assyria, the mere fact of a monumental ornamental façade might be paramount in the identification of a specific and recognizable, and perhaps multi-storeyed complex of rooms.

In any event, what is clear from the foregoing is that the Neo-Assyrian kings were very consciously incorporating into their own building projects both parks, the landscapes of which evoked North Syria, and an architectural form from the same region, that became a regular part of their palaces. Indeed, these references are the only foreign elements noted in the otherwise quite straight-forward accounts. It is therefore implied that the palaces of the West were significant models for the Assyrian kings as they constructed their own apartments and seats of government, and attests to the cultural importance of North Syria in the Assyrian mind.[63]

---

[61] I. Singer, *loc. cit.*, 96ff. and esp. 98.

[62] *Cf.* W. K. Simpson, R. O. Faulkner, and E. F. Wente, Jr., The Literature of Ancient Egypt (New Haven and London 1972), 146, 1:45—in which Wen Amun was taken up (to an upper storey) and found the king of Byblos sitting in his (top) room with his back to the window, from which the waves of the "great Syrian Sea" could be seen. I am grateful to David Silverman for his help in checking the original.

[63] It will be noted that I have avoided an evaluation of the role of Assyrian palaces in the Syrian periphery—for example, at Til Barsib and Arslan Tash—as factors in the transmission of this complex to the capitals. Certainly, the organization of the so-called "private quarters" that may be the throne room—with transverse reception room and bathroom at the back—is found at Arslan Tash in the central area of the palace. This closely parallels the organization of space around the bathroom of Room

In addition to the importation of goods and the adoption of archi-
tectural form, individual elements of iconography and style provide
evidence for the artistic exchange between Assyria and North Syria.
This last category depends heavily upon chronological issues, as prece-
dence in time can suggest in which direction the elements were mov-
ing. As one proceeds with material associated with the Assyrian kings
from Assurnasirpal II to Assurbanipal, it will also be seen that different
sorts of elements and different degrees of interaction are reflected in
the reigns of different kings, and that this must be a reflection both of
historical factors related to political and economic interaction and of
the individual predilections of specific rulers.

The likelihood of Neo-Hittite models for Assurnasirpal's architectural
sculpture has been discussed above. Recent studies on the chronology
of Carchemish are also important with regard to the subject matter
depleted on the reliefs. In earlier years, it was sometimes assumed that
the shift in content from the individual, mythological slabs of the Her-
ald's Wall to the military processions of the Long Wall was dependent
upon influence from Assyria, subsequent to Assurnasirpal's construc-
tion of the palace at Nimrud.[64] While it is certainly true that Assyria
developed narrative relief—especially with regard to military scenes—to
an unprecedented degree, with a fresh look at the chronology of the
Neo-Hittite states on the basis of inscriptions as well as style, the old
assumption of Assyrian priorities must be abandoned once and for all.
Thus, not only were there gateway lions at Carchemish and elsewhere
before the reign of Assurnasirpal, but also the chariot orthostats with

---

12 in the royal palace at Khorsabad, just as the distinct east wing of the Arslan Tash
palace compares well to the block of rooms of the whole private reception suite
at Khorsabad and that of Palace F (*cf.* F. Thureau-Dangin, Arslan Tash (Paris 1931),
Plan 2, esp. Rooms XXII–XXVIII and Rooms XXXII–XLII). Reliefs from the palace
at Arslan Tash, as with the frescoes of Til Barsib, have been variously attributed, from
the *turtan*-ship of Šamši-ilu in the first half of the eighth century to Sargon II (*cf.*
J. E. Reade, *The Neo-Assyrian Court and Army: Evidence from the Sculptures*, Iraq 34 [1972],
88–89), though generally acknowledged to have been executed by a provincial (North
Syrian) sculptor; and the date of the palace itself is widely disputed (*cf.* also A. Moortgat,
The Art of Ancient Mesopotamia [London and New York 1969], 140–143). I fear
therefore that use of either Arslan Tash or Til Barsib in any discussion of the *bīt-ḫilāni*
would only dissolve into "chicken-and egg" arguments of whether the features exhibited
were the result of direct adaptation from North Syrian tradition or a reflection of the
type having already been adopted in the Assyrian capitals and then relayed back to
its administrative outposts in the West.

[64] *Cf.* in general, H. Frankfort, Art and Architecture of the Ancient Orient (London
1969), 280; also D. Ussishkin, *The Date of the Neo-Hittite Enclosure at Karatepe*, AnSt 19
(1969), 127.

either hunt or military objectives, including those from Tell Halaf, the Long Wall at Carchemish, Malatya and the Citadel Gate at Zincirli are all to be placed earlier.[65]

The Long Wall at Carchemish can now be entirely attributed to Suhi II, who must have reigned at the latest in the time of Tukulti-Ninurta II, father of Assurnasirpal.[66] And in fact, the divine figures which head the procession on the Long Wall are best compared to the stele of Tukulti-Ninurta found at Terqa on the Middle Euphrates and thought to have been executed by a local craftsman.[67]

The simple motif on the chariot slabs of a victim beneath the belly of the draught-animal is of course not new to this period, either in Assyria or in North Syria. It is found as early as the so-called "Standard" from the Royal Cemetery at Ur in Mesopotamia, and may be seen as well on a Syrian-style ivory carving from Megiddo of the late second millennium.[68] Yet, while the Assyrian version could well reflect a continuity with Mesopotamian tradition, the identity of details, in zoomorphic yoke-poles, crossed quivers, lion-boss shields at the back of the cab and extra spears, suggests that the same conventions mark both first millennium occurrences (compare, for example. figs. 13 and 14).[69]

That Carchemish in particular might have provided stimuli for Neo-Assyrian artistic activity is not surprising, considering the wealth and

---

[65] W. Orthmann, USK, Pls. 22b, 24a, c–f; 42a, b; 57a.

[66] J. D. Hawkins, AnSt 22 (1972), 87–114, esp. 96.

[67] Compare, e.g., W. Orthmann, USK, Pls. 23e and 5a.

[68] Strommenger, *op. cit.*, P1. 72; G. Loud, The Megiddo Ivories (OIP 52 (1939), 150.

[69] Compare, for example, W. Orthmann, USK, Pl. 24 with W. E. A. Budge, *op. cit.*, Pls. XIV–XV, and *cf.* on this T. A. Madhloom, The Chronology of Neo-Assyrian Art (London 1970), 27–28, who not only argues that these traits must have entered Assyria from North Syria, but also cites a reference in the Annals of Assurnasirpal II to receipt of a chariot as tribute from Sangara of Carchemish (ARAB I, § 476; now A. K. Grayson, ARI II, § 584). The question of the precedence of the 8-spoked wheel must remain open, however; while it does appear in one instance on a relief from Tell Halaf (USK, Pl. lic), other examples from Tell Halaf and all of the ninth century reliefs of Carchemish have 6-spoked wheels on the chariots; and whereas 8-spoked wheels do occur in Assyrian representations of the ninth century ONLY on the chariots of enemies, the identity of the enemy cannot be determined from the reliefs (*cf.* T. A. Madhloom, *op. cit.*, 30–31). The motif of the fallen enemy beneath the chariot horses does of course appear on the White Obelisk, and depending on whether one attributes the obelisk to Assurnasirpal I or II, the potential role of North Syria with regard to the reliefs of Assurnasirpal II at Nimrud could shift drastically. See J. E. Reade, *Assurnasirpal I and the White Obelisk*, Iraq 37 (1975), 129–150 for the latest discussion of this question. The author is clearly strongly in favor of an early date; I myself prefer the later one, although this is not the place to pursue the issue.

power of that state—a reflection of its position at the major crossing of the Euphrates.[70] We even know, from the various rock reliefs of Shalmaneser III in the West, done in good Assyrian style, and from depictions on the Balawat Gates, that Assyrian artists travelled with the army, and were quite capable of observing and absorbing selected elements in the art, as well as accurately rendering the landscape, of the places to which they were exposed.[71]

Of course, this interaction would not have been only uni-directional. The impact of Assyria upon North Syria must have been strong as well—especially for those states which were early allied with Assyria. For example, Kilamua of Sam'al (the estimate of whose dates ranges from ca. 840 to ca. 810 B.C.) records in his inscription that he "hired" the king of Assyria to help against the Danunites of Que; and on his stele he is shown wearing sandals and robe modelled after Assyrian court dress, not the standard Neo-Hittite dress of earlier reliefs (cf. figs. 15 and 16).[72]

I would suggest, however, that the impact of Assyria upon North Syria was not strongly felt until the reign of Shalmaneser III (858–824 B.C.), who so actively campaigned there; and would only have begun to percolate West toward the end of the reign of Assurnasirpal II, when individuals from the area were included in the inauguration festivities of his palace at Nimrud.[73]

This system of mutual, although different, affect must have continued through the first half of the eighth century, despite the fact that we have little concrete evidence. Adadnirari III (810–783) in particular was quite active in the political life of North Syria, as attested by his various stelae—including the recently discovered Pazarçik and Antakya stelae that will be published by K. Balkan, marking the

---

[70] See on this, J. Sasson, *A Sketch of North Syrian Economic Relations in the Middle Bronze Age*, JESHO 9 (1966), 161–181. A study of the political and economic role of Carchemish for the first millennium badly needs to be done; a brief outline of the situation may be found in my dissertation, cited above, fn. 4 Ch. V: The Relative Roles of Individual North Syrian States, 484–500.

[71] O. A. Tasyürek, *Some New Assyrian Rock Reliefs in Turkey*, AnSt 25 (1975), fig. 3 and 167–172; L. W. King, Bronze Reliefs, Pl. LIX. Furthermore, the artists of Carchemish in the period were apparently quite active in their own right with North Syria—*cf.* I. J. Winter, Review of Orthmann, USK, in: JNES 34 (1975), esp. 138.

[72] H. Donner and W. Röllig, Kanaanäische und Aramäische Inschriften (Wiesbaden 1962–64), § 24; W. Orthmann, USK, Pl. 66b.

[73] D. J. Wiseman, *A New Stela of Assurnasirpal II*, Iraq 14 (1952), 22–44; now, A. K. Grayson, ARI 2, esp. § 682.

boundaries between Kummuḫ and Gurgum and between Arpad and La'ash, respectively.[74] It is likely to have been during this period that the lions and genius reliefs of the Outer Gate of the Great Staircase at Carchemish were carved—attributed to one Astiruwas, and clearly assyrianizing in style—although J. D. Hawkins has suggested that they may be somewhat later.[75]

With the reign of Tiglath-pileser III, we return to more solid evidence, and the time which might be characterized as the period of maximum interaction between the two regions. This fact is not at all surprising, since it was Tiglath-pileser III who re-established Assyrian control over most of North Syria and completely re-organized the administration of the Western area.[76] It was at this time that we see the introduction of the Aramaean language, now predominant in North Syria, side by side with cuneiform Akkadian, in Assyria.[77] And it was probably also in this period that the light "Carchemish mina" was introduced in Assyria, which further attests to the economic importance of North Syria for the Empire.[78]

Bar Rakib of Sam'al declares himself a vassal of Tiglath-pileser in his own inscription, as his father had been before him.[79] Based upon

---

[74] A. R. Millard and H. Tadmor, *Adad Nirari III in Syria*, Iraq 35 (1973), 57–64; H. Tadmor, *The Historical Inscriptions of Adad Nirari III*, Iraq 35 (1973), 141–150. The Pazarçik stele is cited in J. D. Hawkins, Review of Orthmann, USK, ZA 63 (1974), 309–310 and in: *Assyrians and Hittites*, Iraq 36 (1974), 74–75 + 80.

[75] AnSt 22 (1972), 105.

[76] In addition to standard historical works, *cf.* H. Tadmor, *Introductory Remarks to a New Edition of the Annals of Tiglath Pileser III*, Proceedings of the Israel Academy of Science and Humanities II/9 (1967); J. D. Hawkins, *Assyrians and Hittites*, Iraq 36 (1974), 67–83 and particularly, in the present volume, M. Weippert, *Zur Syrienpolitik Tiglath-pilesers III.*

[77] *Cf.* H. Tadmor, Unity and Diversity, 42–43, on the significance of the presence of these Aramaean scribes and the degree to which not only the Aramaean language but also customs had penetrated Assyria by the reign of Esarhaddon. This may in fact be reflected in a relief of Tiglath-Pilser III from Nimrud, where scribes register captives—only clearly writing with a stylus on a tablet, presumably in cuneiform, the other with a brush on a long scroll (= R. D. Barnett and M. Falkner, The Sculptures of Assurnasirpal II, Tiglath Pileser II and Esarhaddon from the Central and Southwest Palaces at Nimrud [London 1962], Pl. VI). The same dual scribes are depicted on reliefs from the palace of Sennacherib (*cf.* Paterson, Sinacherib, Pls. 55–67); although T. A. Madhloom, *op. cit.*, 122, has suggested that what we are seeing is rather one scribe only, and an artist making on-site sketches for subsequent reliefs.

[78] *Cf.* J. J. Finkelstein, *Assyrian Contracts from Sultantepe*, AnSt 7 (1957), 143; C. H. W. Johns, Assyrian Deeds and Documents (Cambridge 1901), 264–286.

[79] H. Donner and W. Röllig, *op. cit.*, §§ 215–218, 223–224 and 232–237.

the hairstyle of clearly non-Assyrian soldiers on a relief of Tiglath-pileser, which M. Wäfler has associated specifically with Sam'al, we may in fact be looking at a direct visual reference to North Syrians in the Assyrian army, already well-attested in the texts.[80]

Syria has left its mark upon Tiglath-pileser in other ways as well. On another relief, we see the seated king holding a blossom in one hand (fig. 16).[81] This is a traditional emblem of royalty in Syria, held not only by Bar Rakib, but also by Kilamua, in Sam'al, and going back even farther, to the sarcophagus of Ahiram and the Megiddo ivories of the late second millennium; it appears now, as W. Orthmann has pointed out, for the first time in Assyria.[82]

At the same time, we can also see evidence of this interaction in the opposite direction. On the SW7 ivory furniture panels from Fort Shalmaneser, which I have argued elsewhere to have come perhaps from Sam'al as tribute either to Tiglath-pileser or his successor, Shalmaneser V,[83] the figures are done in an overwhelmingly Syrian style, but are nonetheless clothed in Assyrian garments; while several plaques further demonstrate a number of other Assyrian attributes. Even the lions on some of these plaques find their closest parallels in Assyrian renderings—as, for example, on a hunt relief of Assurnasirpal.[84] A more immediate model is likely to have been work like the Tell Tainat column

---

[80] M. Wäfler, Nicht-Assyrer neuassyrischer Darstellungen, AOAT 26 (1975), 186 and figs. 104, 106, 107; R. D. Barnett and M. Falkner, *op. cit.* T-P III, Pl. XXXVI; and, on foreigners in general in the Assyrian army as pre-presented on relief, *cf.* J. E. Reade, Iraq 34 (1972), 104–107, and B. Hrouda, Kulturgeschichte des assyrischen Flachbildes (Bonn 1965), 149.

[81] R. D. Barnett and M. Falkner, *op. cit.*, T-P III, Pl. XIX.

[82] W. Orthmann, USK, Pls. 63c, 66b + c, 67d. For the sarcophagus, *cf.* E. Porada, *Notes on the Sarcophagus of Ahiram*, JANES 5 (1973), 354–372; for the Megiddo ivories, G. Loud, The Megiddo Ivories (= OIP 52 [1935]), Pls. 4 + 32. Professor Porada's comments, delivered as discussant to this paper at the Rencontre, included the observation that Assyrian adoptation of North Syrian elements in general might have been very conscious attempts—as was certainly the case in the art of the Achaemenid Period later on—to incorporate aspects of the iconography and artistic tradition of annexed territories as a statement of their participation in the Empire. The appearance of the blossom as a royal attribute during the reign of Tiglath-pileser III would be an extremely apt example of such an adoption, and could function on two levels simultaneously; 1) hegemony, as T-p III was also the king who re-incorporated the Western provinces; and 2) belonging, as by creating a common iconographic tradition, the North Syrian or South Syrian recognizes his place in the Empire when in the capital. If this process was conscious, however, it was not uniformly applied to all dependent territories (*cf.* below).

[83] MMJ 11 (1976), 53.

[84] W. E. A. Budge, *op. cit.*, Pls. XII + XLII.

bases, however—dated to just after the incorporation of the 'Amuq as an Assyrian province by Tiglath-pileser, when a more assyrianizing style would have supplanted the earlier, "Hittite" lion type.[85] Similarly, the palace façade at Sakçe Gözü, with its two men opposite a central tree, may also recall Assyrian prototypes, such as the throne-room reliefs of Assurnasirpal (cf. figs. 17 and 18).[86]

While the evidence of Assyrian influence at Sam'al and in the 'Amuq seems stronger than elsewhere in the period, this, too, is not unexpected, as those states with the greatest degree of political dependence upon Assyria would be most likely to show the greatest degree of influence in art.

The impact of North Syria upon the reign of Sargon II is more difficult to document. He, like Tiglath-pileser III, built a *bīt-ḫilāni* in the Syrian manner, and he laid out a park modelled on the landscape of the Amanus. In his reliefs, unless one can speak of the animal-bearer from his park reliefs as related to an earlier North Syrian theme seen on reliefs from Zincirli and Carchemish,[87] individual details are difficult to find. Yet, S. Mazoni has observed that the very plasticity in the sculptured façades at Khorsabad—a departure from the more "pictorial" flat reliefs of earlier kings—may well be due to western stimuli, as seen in the three-quarters reliefs of Sakçe Gözü and elsewhere (figs. 19 and 20);[88] and J. Reade has further speculated that Sargon's very use of basalt for some of his reliefs, as opposed to the usual limestone, as well as an increased naturalism, may reflect North Syrian practices, if not actual craftsmen acquired after the capture of Carchemish in 717 B.C.[89]

The western impact is even stronger in the works associated with Sargon's son and heir, Sennacherib. It has been suggested that Sennacherib as crown prince had been responsible for the administration of the Western province, and that his wife Naqi'a bore a West Semitic name.[90] Be that as it may, his revival of rock reliefs in a clearly Hittite

---

[85] C. Haines, Excavations in the Plain of Antioch II: The Structural Remains of the Later Phases, OIP 95 (1971), 66 and Pl. 80.

[86] Compare, for example, W. Orthmann, USK, Pl. 49a with W. E. A. Budge, *op. cit.*, Pl. XI (= M. E. L. Mallowan, NR I, fig. 43).

[87] A. Moortgat, Die Kunst des Alten Mesopotamien (Köln 1967), Pl. 274; W. Orthmann, USK, Pls. 30e–h + 64c.

[88] S. Mazzoni, Studi sugli Avori di Ziwiye (SS 49 (1977)), 203 and personal communication.

[89] Personal communication, and *Twelve Assurnasirpal Reliefs*, Iraq 27 (1365), 129.

[90] *Cf.*, H. Lewy, *Nitokris—Naqi'a*, JNES 11 (1952), 264–286.

and Neo-Hittite manner is striking evidence of his interest in the West, as seen in a comparison of the reliefs of Maltai and Bavian with those of Yazilikaya, or the first millennium Karasu relief from just above Birecik on the Euphrates (fig. 21).[91] The traditional Hittite and Neo-Hittite mode of representing gods standing on the backs of their attribute animals is here adopted for the first time in Assyria, and clearly at a very high level, as it even becomes the motif applied to a seal inscribed for the king (fig. 22).[92]

Sennacherib is also the first Neo-Assyrian ruler to refer to the carving of female colossi in addition to the traditional lions, bulls and male-headed creatures set up in his palace doorways (a practice continued by Esarhaddon),[93] and this can only be modelled after the female sphinxes known from North Syrian palaces such as Zincirli and Sakçe Gözü and traditionally associated with royal and divine iconography in the West, as recorded in the Old Testament descriptions of the throne and Temple of Yahweh, and as depicted on the sarcophagus of Ahiram and on an ivory panel from Megiddo.[94]

In his inscriptions, as well as his reliefs, Sennacherib emerges as a most extraordinary person, militarily able when necessary, but at the same time unusually interested in matters of art, metallurgy and engineering.[95] One has the sense that he observed everything, and exercised much control over the projects done in his name. In addition to the incorporation of new motifs, his reliefs are the first to show a marked

---

[91] W. Bachmann, Felsreliefs in Assyrien: Bawian, Maltai und Gündük, WVDOG 52 (1927); K. Bittel, Die Hethiter (München 1976), fig. 238, 239; W. Orthmann, USK, Pl. 14f.

[92] M. E. L. Mallowan, NR I, fig. 208, as used on a Treaty Tablet of Esarhaddon found in the Nabu Temple at Nimrud.

[93] ARAB II, §§ 389, 410; R. Borger, Die Inschriften Asarhaddons, AfO Bh 9 (1956), 33:10 + 87:24. An actual example is preserved from Kuyunjik, presumably attributable to Assurbanipal. R. D. Barnett, Sculptures from the North Palace, Pl. 1 (= BM 90954); and a small alabaster model of the time of Esarhaddon from the Southwest Palace at Nimrud; R. D. Barnett and H. Falkner, *op. cit.*, TP III, Pl. CXI.

[94] W. Orthmann, USK, Pls. 50b, 63e, 64d, E. Porada, JANES 5 (1973), Pl. Ia; G. Loud, OIP 52 (1939), Pl. 4; and I Kings 6:23:29. Even the word used by Esarhaddon, Akk. *kuribi*, relates to the Hebrew *cherubim* (*cf.* discussion in Th. A. Busink, Der Tempel von Jerusalem von Salomo bis Herodes [Leiden 1970], 267–272). It is thus quite possible that the immediate model for Sennacherib's application of the female sphinx came more from his campaigns in Judah and exposure to Jerusalem and South Syria, rather than to the North Syria tradition. But a generally western stimulus cannot be disputed (on the sphinxes of Sennacherib, see now the note in J. E. Reade, *Studies in Assyrian Geography, Pt. I: Sennacherib and the 'Waters of Nineveh'*, RA 72 [1978], 60).

[95] *Cf.* e.g., ARAB II, §§ 390–393, 400, etc.

stylistic influence from North Syria. What is new in the reliefs of Sennacherib, and different from those of preceding kings, is a complete change in the proportion of figures (shorter and squatter, more compact), plus a noticeable change in the amount of surface detail added (attention to individual hair curls, rich patterning on garments, etc.).[96] All of these qualities are characteristic of what E. Akurgal has called the "Aramaean" style which had become popular in North Syria around the middle of the eighth century, as seen in the orthostats from Zincirli (fig. 23), for example, and in the rock relief of Urpalla of Tyana at Ivriz (fig. 24), all of the period of Tiglath-pileser III.[97] If one were making chronological equations based only upon stylistic features, one would place the reliefs of Sennacherib very close to these in time; with the aid of associated inscriptions, however, we know that the style developed considerably earlier in North Syria, and thus must have been the source of Sennacherib's inspiration. One is here even tempted to speculate upon the possible relocation of craftsmen subsequent to his father's destructive campaigns in Syria and the probable end of an active Syrian artistic tradition.[98]

In any event, this shift was not a passing phenomenon, as, once initiated, it remains the predominant mode of representation, and becomes

---

[96] E.g., Paterson, Sinacherib, Pls. 71–73, from the Lachish room.

[97] W. Orthmann, USK, Pls. 14e, 50a, 64c, 65b–e, etc., and discussion by E. Akurgal, The Art of Greece: Its Origins (New York 1968), Chs. II and IV, passim. Once again (cf. fn. 63), I am by-passing discussion of the reliefs from Arslan Tash which also manifest very squat proportions (although without the same attention to surface detail—cf. Arslan Tash Atlas, Pls. VII–XI); and thus am also avoiding a crucial question with relation to some of the reliefs of Tiglath-pileser III from Nimrud (cf. M. Weippert, Zur Identifikation des Hamburger Orthostatenfragments Tiglath Pileser III, ZA 64 [1975], 116–122). In particular, the question is who executed the Arslan Tash reliefs, and how the reliefs of Tiglath-pileser III fit into the picture; whether the shift in proportion in Assyrian reliefs actually begins here—a difficult question, since the trend, if such it was, clearly did not continue into the reign of Sargon. The subject matter of the Arslan Tash reliefs: processions of soldiers with spears and helmets—falls into line with the orthostats known from Carchemish in the ninth century (the Long Wall and King's Gate soldiers—W. Orthmann, USK, Pls 25d, 28e–f and 29a–b//Arslan Tash Atlas, Pls. IX + XI); but the theme also continued into the first half of the eighth century with the "captains" of Yariris' King's Buttress (USK, Pls. 31a–d, and J. D. Hawkins, loc. cit., 72 for dating). Just how the Arslan Tash reliefs, which may be dated anywhere from Šamši-Ilu to Tiglath-pileser III, fit within this sequence and within the sequence of Assyrian relief tradition should be the subject of a separate study.

[98] I. J. Winter, Iraq 38 (1976), 19.

even more pronounced in the reliefs of Assurbanipal (fig. 25).[99] In fact, Assyrian receptivity to this particular style is not likely to have been coincidental, for the style suited well the aims of Neo-Assyrian art in the period, as the added opulence and compactness of the figures fits in with the increased intensity of narrative occurring at the same time as a result of purely internal developments.[100]

How then shall we put all of these pieces together? Despite so many historical examples to the contrary, it is too often assumed that a political and administrative center will also be the center of artistic production, and thus the source of all stimuli whenever similarities occur in the art of its neighbors.

With regard to Assyria, this was certainly the case in some instances— for example, as I have tried to demonstrate elsewhere in conjunction with the "Local Style" of Hasanlu to the East, where metalwork and ivory carvings reflect a high degree of assyrianizing elements, transposed from major to minor scale, and architectural decoration in the form of wall tiles closely copies Assyrian models.[101] Assyria must have been getting something from the East as well, but presumably this was in the nature of raw materials and routes of access, and not in the absorption of artistic features, despite a vital indigenous tradition. Therefore we must assume that this reflects a choice on the part of Assyria not to process stimuli, just as it reflects a choice on the part of the Iranians to emulate Assyria once contact had been established.

The situation on the eastern front highlights the very different situation in the West, where, as we have seen, North Syria contributes much to the artistic life of Assyria in a complex feedback-loop of mutual interaction.

---

[99] E.g. R. D. Barnett, Sculptures from the North Palace, Pls. XVII, XVIII, L, LXV, LXVII.

[100] *Cf.* E. Akurgal, The Art of Greece, ch. I. Assyrian royal monuments could also consciously address a Western audience, as in the case of the Esarhaddon stele found at Zincirli (von Luschan, Ausgrabungen in Sendschirli IV, Pls. I and III). The king is represented on the front; on the two narrow sides are two unidentified flanking figures—one shown in good Assyrian court dress, wrapped and fringed, the other in typical Aramaean garb, with vertically-pleated skirt. Whoever these figures may have been, it is likely that the dual usage of local and imperial persons and/or styles was intended to strengthen the propagandistic nature of the monument—originally set up on a sockle at the Outer Citadel Gate.

[101] I. J. Winter, *The 'Local Style' of Hasanlu IVB: A study in receptivity*, in: L. D. Levine and T. C. Young, Jr., eds., Mountains and Lowlands: Essays in the Archaeology of Greater Mesopotamia (Malibu 1977), 371–386.

It is never a question of the "imposition" of North Syrian elements upon Assyria, however. Throughout, Assyria retains its own identity; and the development of historical narrative in relief parallel to written texts, for example, is not even approximated in Syria. Art in Assyria clearly had its own ends; yet to achieve those ends, the Assyrians drew heavily from the West.

The historical context in which this took place is significant, as the process of establishing large-scale military and political control over surrounding territory, that had begun in the ninth century, brought with it the need for an appropriate degree of public display: a visual medium in which the basic elements of the identity and power of the State could be encoded and beamed as a public message. Such a message would serve at the same time as a self-reinforcing prop, for, the statement once made creates its own truth. What we see at work, therefore, is the mediative role of art as a social and culturally-solidifying force.

In the course of this process, elements or forms were selected from the culturally advanced neighbors to the West—states which had already forged their own language of public display. As we have seen, this took the form of luxury goods accumulated for conspicuous consumption, which themselves became a spur to local production; architectural forms, such as monumental stone sculpture and the *bīt-ḫilāni*; and the individual elements of iconography and style, details which sometimes added royal attributes (as with Tiglath-pileser III), and sometimes aided in the impact of the total visual imagery (as with Sennacherib). And while Assyria eventually surpassed its models, both in the degree of display and in the complexity of the territorial state, still, recognition of the value of Syrian luxury and artistic production did not diminish as long as Syria was artistically viable.

Whether this process had already begun in the Middle Assyrian period, or was a function of the Neo-Assyrian revival must remain an open question. However, what is clear is that major political centers do not only "influence", they also "absorb"—and in each instance, as here with the differing cases if Iran and Syria, each pair of actors must be separately examined according to their potential for giving and receiving.

In the case of Assyrian relations with the West, it seems evident that individual states had particular histories and individual Assyrian kings had specific personalities which governed the intensity of interaction on an artistic level. Yet withall, there can be no doubt that the

North Syrian region in general always enjoyed some special cultural status—the Assyrians adapting North Syrian elements right through the period, as they worked at shaping and re-shaping the visual metaphors of Empire.

Figure 1. Neo-Hittite lion, Zincirli.

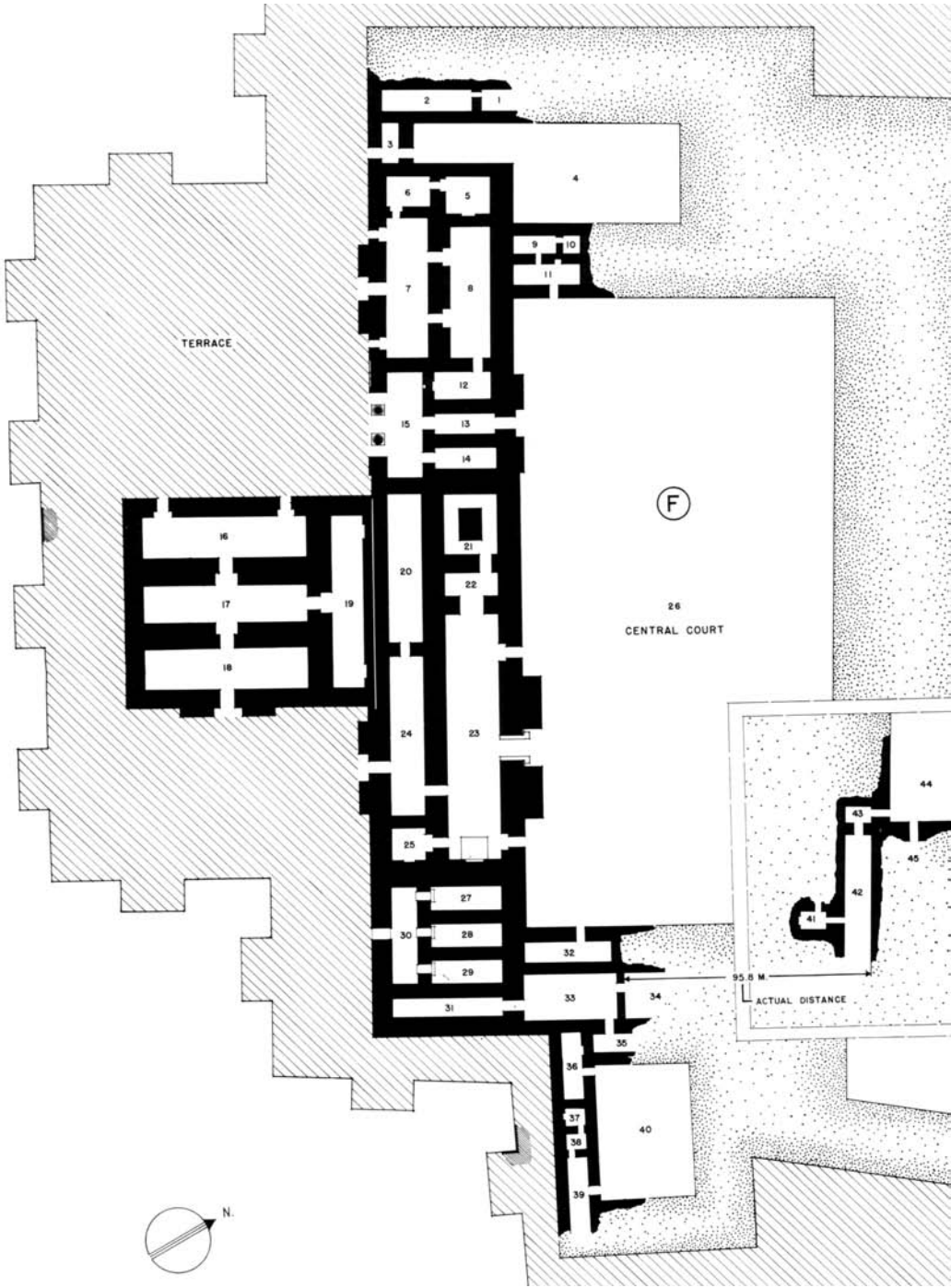Figure 2. Assyrian lion, Ishtar Temple, Nimrud.

Figure 3. Plan, Palace F, Khorsabad.
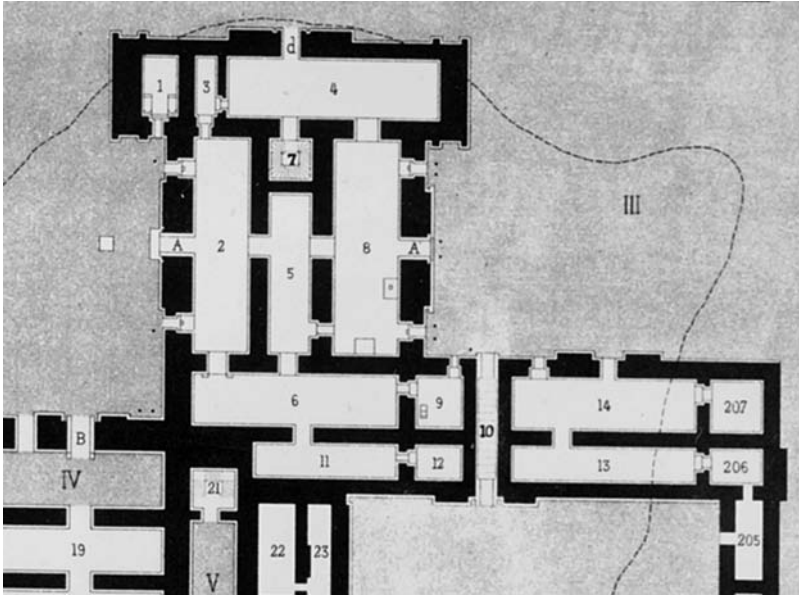
Figure 4. Detail, Plan of Reception/residential complex, Royal Palace, Khorsabad.
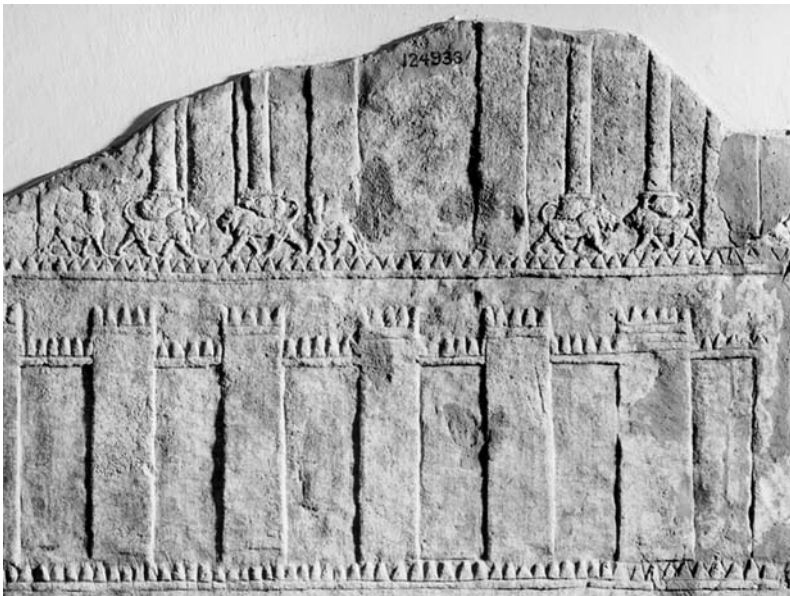
Figure 5. Relief, Palace of Assurbanipal, Nineveh.
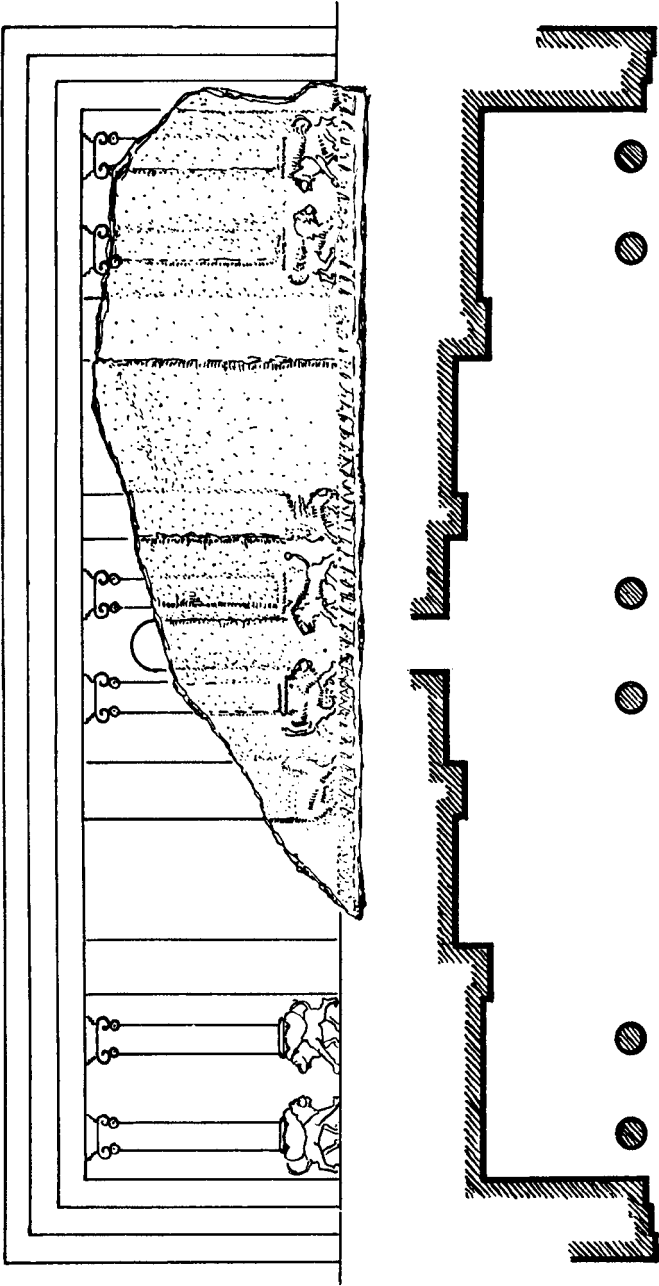
Figure 6. Weidhaas reconstruction of palace façade from relief of Assurbanipal, Niniveh.

Figure 7. Plan, Royal Palace, Khorsabad.
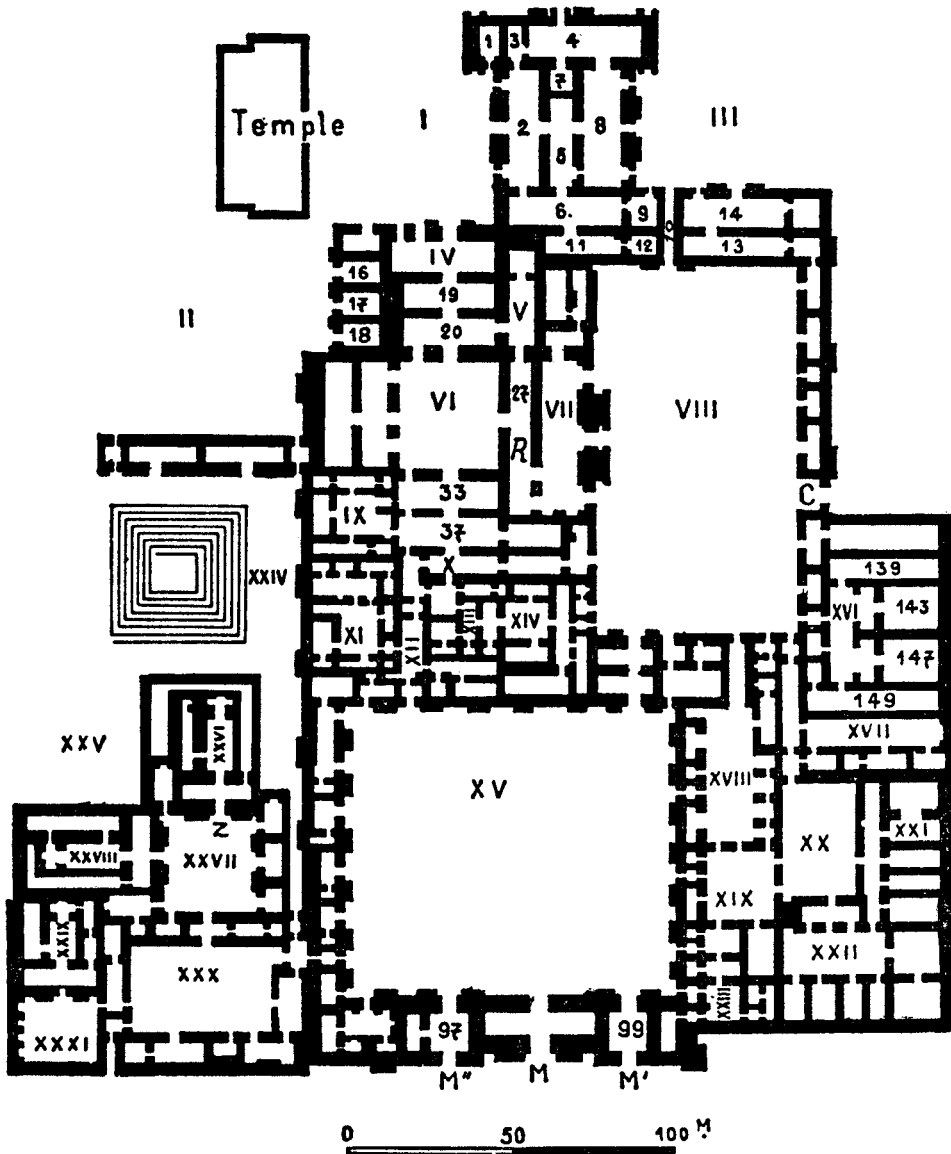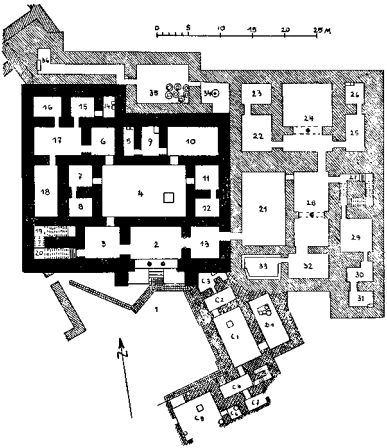
Figure 8. Plan of hilani, Alalakh
level IV.
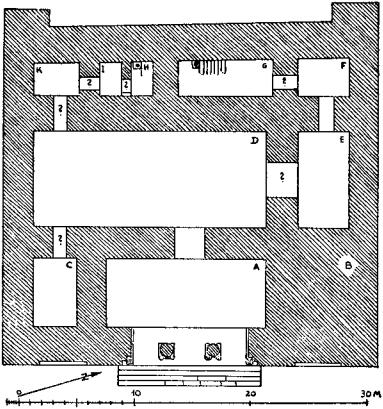
Figure 9. Plan of Hilani III,
Zincirli.
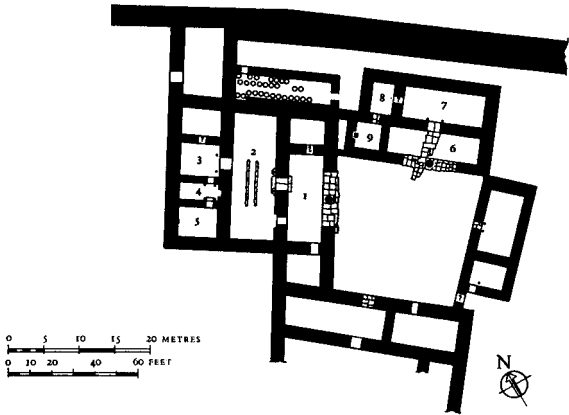
Figure 10. Plan of Upper Palace, Zincirli.
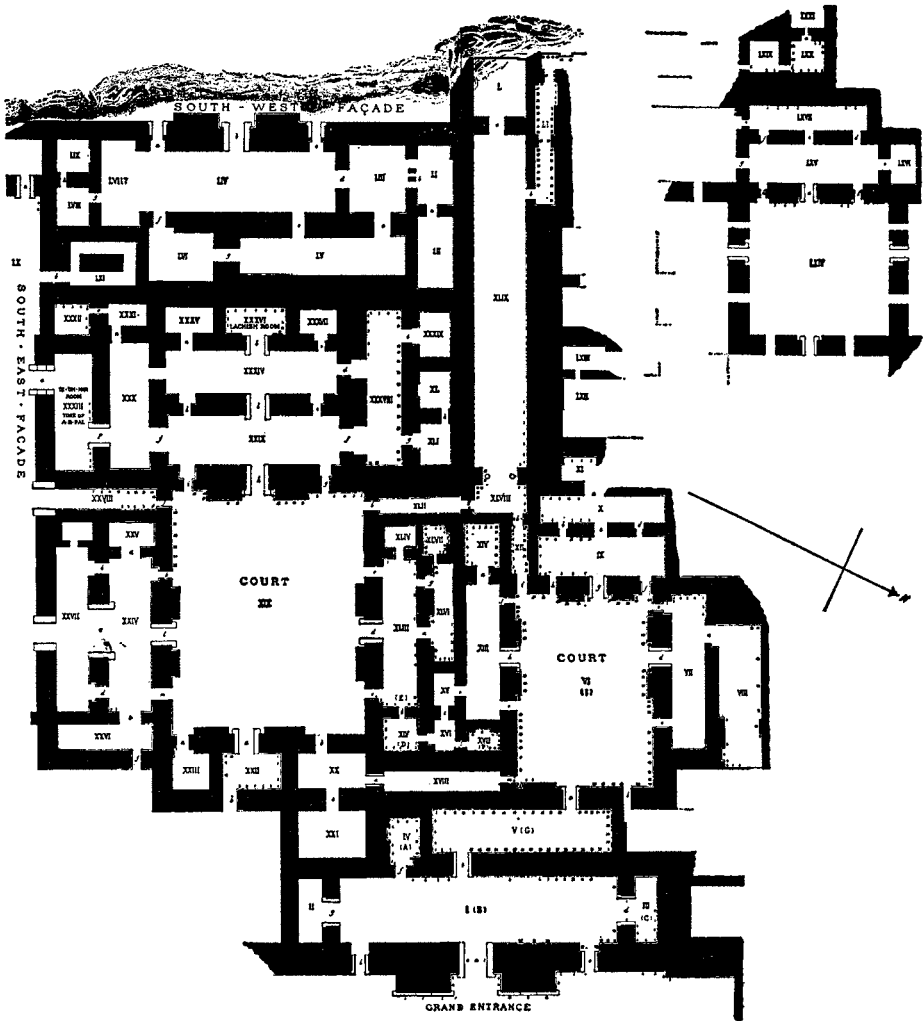
Figure 11. Plan, Palace of Sennacherib, Nineveh.

Figure 12. Relief, King's hunters
in a park, Room 7, Khorsabad.

Figure 13. Relief, Chariot with
enemy, Long Wall, Carchemish.

Figure 14. Relief, King in chariot with enemy, Northwest Palace of
Assurnasirpal, Nimrud.

Figure 15. Stele of Kilamua,
Zincirli.

Figure 16. Relief of
Tiglath-pileser III,
Nimrud.

Figure 17. Relief from Throne Room of Assurnasirpal,
Northwest Palace, Nimrud.

Figure 18. Relief from palace
façade, Sakce Gözu.

Figure 19. Relief, Royal Palace,
Khorsabad.

Figure 20. Relief, Palace entry,
Sakce Gözu.

Figure 21. Rock relief of god on
stag, Karasu.

Figure 22. Seal of Sennacherib,
drawing from impression on
Esarhaddon Vassal treaty, Nabu
Temple, Nimrud.

Figure 23. Relief of courtier,
Hilani III, Zincirli.

Figure 24. Rock relief of Warpala-
was of Tyana at Ivriz: detail.

Figure 25. Relief of Assurbanipal,
North Palace Nineveh.

CARCHEMISH *ŠA KIŠAD PURATTI*

Perhaps no other site in the region of northern Syria and south-eastern Anatolia played as important a role in the history of the early first millennium B.C. as Carchemish, "on the banks of the Euphrates." It is one of the best-documented sites of the period, due to a combination of Neo-Assyrian references and the excavated material of the site itself, including inscriptions, reliefs and large-scale architectural projects initiated by the rulers of Carchemish. All of these documents attest to its immense wealth and power.

The site was first explored in the 1870's on behalf of the British Museum, once George Smith had determined that the modern town of Djerabis (Jeralblus) must be ancient Carchemish; and was subsequently excavated and published under the Museum's auspices.[1] Several encyclopedic compendia published in recent years have summarized in cogent syntheses the information known about Carchemish.[2] Nevertheless, I would like to include this present review of the material as a tribute to Richard D. Barnett—whose own work has been closely associated with the site in particular and with North Syria in general—in order to add a few points regarding the nature of Carchemish and the role played by the state in the history and art-history of the times.

I propose to investigate the following issues: first, the role of Carchemish as a centre of art production and of craftsmen, relevant not only to its own works, but to those from other sites; second, the role

---

* This article originally appeared as "Carchemish *ša kišad puratti* [Carchemish on the Banks of the Euphrates]," *Anatolian Studies* 33 (1983) 177–197.

[1] D. G. Hogarth, *Carchemish, Part I: Introductory*, London, 1914; C. L. Woolley, *Carchemish, Part II: The Town Defenses*, London, 1921; C. L. Woolley and R. D. Barnett, *Carchemish Part III: The Excavations in the Inner Town, and The Hittite Inscriptions*, London, 1952 (henceforth abbreviated *Carc.* I, II, III.)

[2] Ranging, e.g., from "Carchemish", in C. F. Pfeiffer, ed., *The Biblical World: A dictionary of Biblical archaeology*, Grand Rapids, MI, 1966, pp. 165–9 to "Karkamiš," by J. D. Hawkins, in *RLA* V: 5–6, Berlin, 1980, pp. 426–46.

of Carchemish as an economic and trading centre, especially with regard to the acquisition of metals; and third, the role of Carchemish in relation to the western expansion of the Neo-Assyrian empire and the determination of Assyrian military strategies from the 9th through the late 8th centuries B.C.

The modern Turkish/Syrian border, established along the line of the Ottoman railroad to Baghdad, runs between the twin villages of Kargamiş to the north and Jerablus to the south, bisecting the ancient site of Carchemish. Its hinterland, the plain of Jerablus, extends some 20 miles to the south, with small side valleys off to the west that rise sharply into the hills of the Kurd Dagh.[3] The area is extremely fertile, if spatially limited; watered not only by the Euphrates, but also by the river's only significant western tributary, the Sajur.[4]

   The mound of Carchemish commands the entire plain, consisting of a high citadel and an extended lower town (figs. 1 and 2). According to British surveys, there are more than 30 additional mounds in the valley.[5] Several mounds have been shown to contain first millennium material, although none rivals Carchemish in size or strategic position. These would probably correspond to the "cities of Carchemish" mentioned in Assyrian sources—the towns and villages of the surrounding territory under the dominion of the capital.[6]

   The location of Carchemish at a major east-west crossing of the Euphrates, as well as its position on the Euphrates, assured the site's importance as a principal thoroughfare in the ancient world. Easy access to the west was possible either via Gaziantep/Killiz to the northwest, or via Aleppo to the southwest. Communications between Carchemish and Aleppo are possible by several routes, the most preferable taking a southerly road out of the plain, passing through the towns of Membidj (Assyrian Nappigu/Nanpigi, classical Hierapolis) and El Bab. To the

---

   [3] See panoramic view of the plain, taken from the citadel of Carchemish, in *Carc. II*, frontispiece.
   [4] This smaller river rises near Gaziantep and enters the plain at the northwest, to join the Euphrates further south—just opposite Tell Ahmar, ancient Til Barsib (cf. sketch map in *Carc. II*, fig. 5).
   [5] Hogarth, D. G., "Carchemish and its Neighbourhood," *LAAA II* (1909), 165–89.
   [6] D. D. Luckenbill, *Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia*, Vol. I, Chicago, 1926, § 651. (See also, recent speculation that the territory controlled by Carchemish may even have extended to Tünp, south of Gaziantep on a tributary of the Sajur: J. D. Hawkins and A. Morpurgo-Davies, "Buying and Selling in Hieroglyphic Luwian," in *Serta Indogermanica: Festschrift für Günter Neumann*, J. Tischler, ed., Innsbruck, 1982, p. 92.)

northwest, one would most likely follow the Sajur to near its source at Gaziantep (Aintab), located on a large plain between hills to east and west, and thence up to Maraş at the head of the Kara Su valley. From that point, one has access across the Amanus or due north into the Taurus and onto the Anatolian plateau.[7]

This combination of location on the river, radial routes to and from Carchemish and fertile hinterland placed the city/state in the most favoured of positions, at the hub of virtually all essential activities and movements in the period. Thus, Carchemish meets all of the requirements of modern economic geography in the location of a "central place": a high coefficient of importance in relation to the surrounding territory, control of or dominance over auxiliary towns and villages, necessary arable land and pasturage to support a concentrated population, and routes of access to major resources as well as to other central places, such that conditions for a viable economic life may be demonstrated.[8]

Because very few contemporary documents explicitly refer to the economic and political life of Carchemish, the role played by the state in the first half of the first millennium B.C. must be reconstructed from archaeological evidence, previously-attested historical references, mention in Assyrian sources and modern inference. Of these, Neo-Assyrian accounts of interaction between the two states, from the reign of Assurnaṣirpal II (883–859 B.C.) to the conquest of Carchemish by Sargon II (in 717 B.C.), provide the most direct information.[9] The

---

[7] For topographic details, I have referred to the US War and Navy Department Agency; Army Map Service Sheets, nos. 117470–475, Washington 1945 (Syria) and to the map of Prof. F. Sabri Duran, published by Kannat Kitabevi, Istanbul, 1951 (Turkey). For the Aleppo route, cf. R. Dussaud, *Topographie historique de la Syrie antique et médiévale*, Paris 1927, and J. Eddé, *Géographie de la Syrie et du Liban*, Beirut 1931. For the Killiz-Gaziantep route, see H. H. von der Osten, *Explorations in Hittite Asia Minor, 1929* [O.I.C. 8] Chicago 1930, and A. Archi, P. E. Pecorella & M. Salvini, *Gaziantep e la sua regione*, Rome 1971. According to a personal communication from M. V. Seton-William in 1972, there is a large mound at Killiz that has never been excavated.

[8] Primary studies: W. Christaller, *Central Places in Southern Germany*, Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1966 (originally published in German, in Jena, 1933) and A. Lösch, *The Economics of Location*, New Haven, 1954 (originally Jena, 1944). More recently, see P. Haggett, *Locational Analysis in Human Geography*, London, 1965, B. J. Berry, *Geography of Market Centres and Retail Distribution*, Englewood Cliffs, N.J. 1967, and R. J. Chorley and P. Haggett, *Network Analysis in Geography*, New York, 1970. For applications to earlier, historical situations, see G. W. Skinner, "Marketing and Social Structure in Rural China," *JAS* 24 (1964) 195–228 and 363–99, as well as G. A. Johnson, "A Test of the Utility of Central Place Theory in Archaeology," in *Man, Settlement and Urbanism*, eds. P. J. Ucko, R. Tringham and G. W. Dimbleby, London, 1972, pp. 769–85.

[9] See complete list of references in Hawkins, *RLA*, V/6, pp. 441–2.

relatively large number of 9th–8th century texts from Carchemish, by contrast, written in hieroglyphic Luwian and inscribed on stelae and architectural orthostats, were mainly for display purposes: providing titles and attributes of patron-rulers, but neither annalistic nor event-full.[10]

Of the archaeological remains at Carchemish, several building phases can be distinguished, associated with particular rulers, into which the sculpture, reliefs and inscribed slabs can be placed.[11] The best reconstruction for the 10th–9th century reliefs—incorporating textual and epigraphic evidence as well as stylistic arguments—places the material of the Water Gate earliest in the sequence, followed by the Long Wall of Sculpture attributed to Suhis II, and then, the King's Gate associated with his son, Katuwas. The reliefs of the uninscribed Herald's Wall have been variously dated; I would prefer to see them contemporary with or just before the Long Wall of Suhis; Genge would bring them down to Katuwas.[12] The Royal Buttress and several miscellaneous pieces are then to be associated with Yariris and Kamanis, regent and son respectively of one Astiruwas, founder of a new dynasty prominent in the first half of the 8th century; and some later inscriptions and reliefs

---

[10] For the inscriptions from Carchemish, see J. D. Hawkins, "Building Inscriptions of Carchemish," *Anat. Stud.* XXII (1972) 87–114; id., "Some Historical Problems of the Hieroglyphic Luwian Inscriptions," *Anat. Stud.* XXIX (1979) 153–167; id., "Kubaba at Karkamiš and Elsewhere," *Anat. Stud.* XXXI (1981) 147–175, and summaries in id., *RLA* V/6, pp. 442–6.

[11] In addition to the primary publication of this material, see important review article of *Carc.* III: H. G. Güterbock, "Carchemish", *JNES* XIII (1954) 102–14; also recent detailed studies of the sculpture and reliefs by Orthmann and Genge: W. Orthmann, *Untersuchungen zur späthethitischen Kunst* [*Saarbrucker Beiträge zur Altertumskunde*, Bd. 8] Bonn, 1971; H. Genge, *Nordsyrisch-sudanatolische Reliefs: Eine archäologisch-historische Untersuchung, Datierung und Bestimmung*, Copenhagen, 1979; henceforward Orthmann, *USK*, and Genge, *NSR*. See also summary of monuments and their dating in Hawkins, *RLA* V, pp. 439–41, and reviews of Orthmann by Winter, *JNES* 34 (1975) 137–42 and Hawkins, *ZA* 63 (1974) 309–10.

[12] Genge, *NSR*, Ch. IV: 1, p. 57. It is curiously disturbing that the name of such a wealthy king as Sangara, attested in Assyrian tribute lists from at least ca. 870 when first mentioned by Assurnasirpal II, to 848 B.C. when last mentioned by Shalmaneser III, should not appear on any of the monuments preserved from Carchemish itself (cf. Hawkins, *RLA* V/6, pp. 443–4). In order to accommodate the Assyrian evidence, the dynasty of kings represented by buildings and inscription: Suhis I, Astuwatamanzas, Suhis II and Katuwas, have all been placed prior to Sangara, beginning in the middle of the 10th century (Hawkins, "Assyrians and Hittites," *Iraq* XXXVI (1974) 70–2). As for Sangara, there are several possibilities: (1) the king did not in fact build or inscribe any buildings, the major construction having been completed prior to his reign and/or the demands of Assyrian tribute having depleted his resources; (2) evidence of his building has not yet been discovered; or (3) he ruled and built under a different name.

have been suggested by Hawkins to belong to the reign of Pisiris, king at the time of the conquest of Carchemish by Sargon of Assyria.[13]

The extent of the building programme is particularly impressive. Within a walled Inner Town covering some 2½ square miles, only a small fraction of the total area has been excavated.[14] This consists of the "*ḫilāni*", a large, mainly unexcavated building to the east of the elaborate King's Gate against which the Royal Buttress was subsequently added; the Temple of the Storm God, whose exterior west wall forms the Long Wall of sculpture attributed to Suhis II, that leads directly to the Great Staircase mounting the citadel; and the approach along which the Herald's Wall reliefs face, leading down to the Water Gate and the river.[15] Despite the fact that the work was conceived and executed over several reigns, the end product was an imposing inner town, surrounding and leading to the citadel, that was decorated with pious and powerful scenes and inscribed texts appropriate to a prosperous and powerful regional centre.

With this background established, we may proceed to consideration of the first of three issues to be discussed in the present article: the role of Carchemish as a centre of artistic production and possibly even of craftsmen supplied to other North Syrian states.

Scholars who have studied the art of this period have generally conceded the unity of a "Late Hittite" style pervading the sculptural reliefs of various sites in northern Syria and southeastern Anatolia. One need only refer to the close thematic and stylistic parallels which may be drawn between the orthostats from Carchemish and those from Tell Halaf or Zincirli in the 9th century B.C.[16] Nevertheless, despite these

---

[13] Hawkins, *Iraq*, XXXVI, p. 73.

[14] Cf. plan, *Carc.*, II, Pl. 3.

[15] Cf. plan, *Carc.*, III, Pl. 41a. There was evidently also a temple to the goddess Kubaba on the citadel, although few remains were found (cf. Güterbock, *JNES* XIII, p. 109).

[16] Thematic parallels exist in considerable number: bowman vs. horned animal, chariot riding over fallen enemy, camel rider, animal combats, chimaera and the "Humbaba" motif at Tell Halaf and Carchemish; lion-genius holding reversed animal, winged griffin genius, chimaera, storm god, seated woman in high polos, bowman vs. horned animal, chariot riding over fallen enemy at Zincirli and at Carchemish [cf. Orthmann, *USK*, Pls. 12a, 9a, 8e, 11e, 11g and 10a (Halaf), compared with Pls. 33d, 24a, 28c, 33g, 27b, 28a (Carc.); and Pls. 60a, 59b, 61c, 58d and 59c (Zinc.) with Pls. 33a, 26d, 27b, 23e, 29f, 24a, 33d (Carc.)]. The closest comparisons in style and details are to be made in facial physiognomy, dress and ornaments such as crests on horses' heads [ibid., Pls. 8d, 28a, 57c; 11a, 29c, 57d; 11b, 24a, 57a].

relationships, no one would suggest that the reliefs were all done by the same hands or workshops. Proportions of figures, control of composition, use of slabs and variation in details are sufficiently distinctive as to argue rather for a common cultural environment in which they were all separately produced.

The situation is quite different, however, when one compares the early sculptural remains from Til Barsib with those of Carchemish. Til Barsib (modern Tell Ahmar) lies on the east bank of the Euphrates, less than 13 miles downstream and visible from the Carchemish citadel. It, too, commanded an important river crossing; so much so that it became the seat of the Aramaean state of Bit Adini, ultimately taken by Shalmaneser III of Assyria in 856. Two large stelae found at the site are not only pre-Assyrian in date, but pre-Aramaean—their inscriptions in hieroglyphic Luwian referring to a Hamiyatas, in one case as ruler, in the other as the predecessor of the current ruler.[17] The closeness of the storm-gods depicted on each stele to early works from Carchemish can only be seen from the perspective of very close interaction between the two centres.

The god of Stele A (fig. 3, = Hawkins, Tell Ahmar 2) wears the same garment and headgear as the Carchemish gods of the Herald's Wall and the Long Wall (cf. figs. 5 and 6). Also, outlines, proportions, smiting gesture, weapons and details of beard and hair-curl are virtually *identical*, as are the way in which hands—palm, thumb and grasping fingers—are rendered.[18] To this group can also be added the slightly later Stele B (fig. 4, = Hawkins, Tell Ahmar 1), although it is heavily restored. The guilloche base-line finds its counterpart on the Long Wall, and the bull on which the god stands can be compared directly to the bull-basin of Katuwas from the Temple of the Storm God at Carchemish as well as a relief from the Herald's Wall (cf. figs. 7 and

---

[17] The most current editions of the Til Barsib stelae are to be found in J. D. Hawkins, "The Hieroglyphic Luwian Inscriptions of Syria," to be published in *Annales Archéologiques de Syrie* [Stele A of Hamiyatas =Hawkins, Tell Ahmar 2] and in id., "The 'Autobiography of Ariyahina's Son': An edition of the hieroglyphic Luwian stelae Tell Ahmar 1 and Aleppo 2," *Anat. Stud. 30* (1980) 141–56 [Stele B, naming Hamayatas as a previous ruler, = Hawkins, Tell Ahmar l]. This material is further discussed in the present volume by the same author, to whom I am indebted for permission to make reference to his forthcoming ms. For Stele A, see also, A. Poetto, "Una revisione dell'iscrizione Luvio-geroglifica di Til-Barsip II," *Oriens Ant.*, 17 (1978), 279–85; for general discussion, D. Ussishkin, "Was Bit-Adini a Neo-Hittite or Aramaean State?" *Orientalia*, NS 40 (1971) 431–7.

[18] Orthmann, *USK*, Pl. 53c (Til Barsib) with Pls. 23e, 26b (Carc.).

10),[19] where the same proportions, conventions for body-divisions and general form are used. A similar identity may be demonstrated for the fragments of relief showing soldiers holding the decapitated heads of enemies from Til Barsib with the foot soldiers represented on the Long Wall—including the same way of holding the diagonal spear shaft that falls between the soldiers' bodies and the decapitated heads held in outstretched hands.[20]

These parallels suggest not just a sharing of motifs common to neighbouring states, but an actual sharing of craftsmen. Indeed, Barnett had noted, with respect to Stele B and the reliefs of Katuwas, that the same individual could well have done both.[21] The implications of this are far-reaching in terms of the relationship between political power and artistic production. One need not even argue that the finished works were executed *at* Carchemish and then exported. For, on the basis of the extraordinary open-air site of Yesemek, where sculpture was being carved at the quarry prior to distribution, this could have been the norm throughout the region.[22] Nevertheless, Carchemish is clearly the dominant installation, with a more coherently-conceived aesthetic and a more ambitious building programme—from which must have come the conception and the impetus for the sculpture. It would suggest, therefore, that before the conquest by Shalmaneser III and before the probably quite recent takeover by Aramaeans, the rulers of Til Barsib had turned to the older and more established state of Carchemish for craftsmen.[23]

The idea of Carchemish as a centre of artistic production and stimulus in the 9th century B.C. suggests itself again in relation to the statue of a king standing upon a double-lion base associated with Palace J at

---

[19] Ibid., Pl. 53d (Til Barsib) with Pls. 24a, b, etc. and 25e (Carc.).

[20] Ibid., Pl. 54a–c (Til Barsib) with Pl. 25a, b, d (Carc).

[21] Barnett, *Carc. III*, p. 263; and cf. Genge, *NSR*, p. 57, for the same possibility.

[22] U. B. Alkım, *Yesemek Taşocağı ve Heykel Atelyesinde Yapılan Kazı ve Araştırmalar*, Ankara, Türk Tarih Kurumu Basimevi, 1974. With this in mind, one is tempted to encourage archaeological survey along the Euphrates basin for comparable quarries in our region, particularly as Sennacherib recorded exploiting a quarry for stone jars and sculpture at "Kapridargila, on the border of Til Barsib" (Luckenbill, *ARAB*, II, § 390).

[23] I would not be at all surprised if the basalt "Kubaba" stele from Birecik, just upstream of Carchemish, also belonged to this group, as once again, the dress, hairstyle, proportions, polos, hand positions, and mirror can be directly compared to female figures from Carchemish, such as the goddess from the Long Wall, and the seated and processing women from the King's Gate (cf. Orthmann, *USK*, Pls. 5c and Pls. 23b, 29f and g.

Zincirli.[24] In general, garment, belt and sword of the royal figure can be related to the figure of Katuwas that introduces that king's major inscription slab.[25] But more important, the head of the Zincirli statue is virtually identical to a head in the round which is all that has been published of a statue of the reign of Katuwas that once stood on one of two double-lion bases from Carchemish.[26] I have elsewhere argued for differences in the bases from the two sites being attributed to the fact that the Carchemish bases are earlier than the statues they support.[27] The Zincirli statue and base would then be contemporary with the Katuwas statue; the two heads so close that one might even argue for borrowed craftsmen. In any event, unlike the more generalized correspondences in sculpture cited above between reliefs from Carchemish and those of Zincirli, in *this* case, the work from Carchemish appears to have provided the model for the isolated example from Zincirli—an emulation that seems appropriate given the greater size and wealth of Carchemish when compared with that of Sam'al, and the latter state's recurring tendency to align itself as a client of larger states in subsequent periods.[28]

Thus, both the Til Barsib stelae and the Zincirli statue speak to the artistic role exercised by Carchemish as a cultural centre of the North Syrian and Southeast Anatolian states in the 10th–9th century B.C. And in addition, in the historically specific instance one sees an example of a more general situation:—one in which it is to be expected that dominant centres should exert such "influence" upon less powerful, less wealthy,

---

[24] Ibid., Pl. 62c, d and e. The statue base, with a small genius figure in relief kneeling between two lions, is very close in subject matter and conception, though different in style from two such bases found at Carchemish, ibid., Pls. 32d and e (= *Carc.* II, B.26 and III, B.53a; see on this also, M. Mallowan, "Carchemish," *Anat. Stud.* XXII (1972) 83–4).

[25] Ibid., Pl. 35g (= *Carc.* II, A. 13).

[26] Ibid., Pl. 32a,b. (= *Carc.* Ill, B.54a). See addendum, p. 197.

[27] Contrary to Orthmann, *USK*, p. 60; cf. my review of same, *JNES*, 34 (1975), p. 138. In fact, this would not be the only work stylistically contemporary with the Herald's wall and apparently re-used by Katuwas in the Royal Buttres—cf. *Carc.* III, p. 195 and discussion by Güterbock, *JNES*, XIII, pp. 106–7.

[28] E.g., vis-à-vis Assyria in the reigns of Kilamuwa (9th c.) and Panammuwa and Bar-Rakib (8th century)—cf. H. Donner – W. Röllig, *Kanaanäische und aramäische Inschriften*, Wiesbaden 1968, Nos. 24, 215 and 216–18, resp. On the Kilamuwa text, cf. also, F. M. Fales, "Kilamuwa and the foreign Kings: Propaganda vs. Power," *Welt des Orients* X (1979) 6–22. Genge (*NSR*, Ch. II, pp. 48–50) would see this Zincirli ruler as a crude Aramaic copy of a Carchemish prototype.

less established places, while ambitious sub-primary places should wish to "emulate" what is being produced in the major centre.[29]

It is indeed unfortunate in this regard that so few artifactual remains were retrieved as the result of excavations at Carchemish which could shed light on smaller-scale artistic production at the site. Yet, one group of pieces found in the original excavations may perhaps be used as evidence for internal production of portable objects, comparable to the larger, fixed monuments. I refer to fragments of two steatite/chlorite pyxides found in the vicinity of the Water Gate, and a fragmentary pyxis lid reported as a surface find.[30]

Only a small portion of the bottoms of the two pyxides remain, but there is enough preserved to indicate that both contained scenes of animal and human figures. The first (fig. 8) shows the feet of a bull, with heavy hooves and a straight tail falling between the hind legs, that has an exact parallel in proportion and rendering on reliefs from the Herald's Wall (fig. 10).[31] Behind the bull is a couchant lion with marked shoulder outline, again with the stylization common to reliefs as well.[32]

On the second pyxis, despite the meagre preservation, we are able to reconstruct most of the encircling scene (cf. figs. 9 a–c). A well-executed guilloche band forms the bottom edge. Above this, from left to right, we see parts of human feet pointing right, set on a stool or pedestal; the bases of two conical plants or altars, one of which bulges out just as the pyxis breaks off; one small palmette flower; the feet and hem of a long fringed garment belonging to a standing figure facing left (an attendant to the possibly seated figure facing right?); then a second pair of feet facing left and a vertical element that is possibly a plant stem. That whole group seems to form a unit, not unlike scenes on some ivory pyxides of the period.[33] It is followed by a pair of striding male legs in a short skirt to the right, before whom is a small leaping

---

[29] For a discussion of the processes involved in such interaction, see I. J. Winter, "Perspective on the 'Local Style' of Hasanlu IVb: A study in receptivity," in *Mountains and Lowlands: Essays in the Archaeology of Greater Mesopotamia*, eds. L. D. Levine and T. C. Young, Jr., Malibu, 1977, pp. 371–86.

[30] *Carc.* II, Pl. 28:2, 3 and 4.

[31] *Carc.* III, B.49b (= Orthmann, *USK*, Pl. 27a).

[32] *Carc.* I, B. 1la and 1la (= Orthmann, *USK*, Pls. 26b and a).

[33] R. D. Barnett, *A Catalogue of the Nimrud Ivories*, London 1957, S.1, 2, 10, 19, 20, 28, 30, for example.

lion followed by a larger lion facing left and probably opposed to the man. A small goat, whose legs appear to be dangling in mid-air, is perhaps being carried by another man facing right. Beyond him is a lion-and-bull combat, in which the bull's chest is already on the ground, one foreleg folded underneath him, the other stretched out in front and partly overlapped by the attacking lion. Finally, another man in a short skirt faces right, and before him are the hind legs of a hoofed animal—probably a goat—and part of another palmette plant.

The care with which the guilloche band is executed, and the overall proportions of the continuous loops, find close parallel in the guilloche forming the lower band of the Long Wall reliefs and inscriptions (cf. fig. 5).[34] We cannot see enough of the figure at far left to compare with other seated figures, such as the wife of Suhis on the Long Wall, but she, too, has her feet on a footstool (see *Carc.* III, Plate B.40b). The long garment with vertical fold and fringed hem worn by the attendant figures in that grouping are clearly matched in the garments worn by gods who stand on top of a couchant lion in the Great Staircase relief, as well as those worn by the musicians of Katuwas from the King's Gate (fig. 12).[35] Similarly, the kilt worn by the various figures engaged in animal combats—short fringed skirt with diagonal seam—is identical to that of a kneeling hero on a Herald's Wall relief (fig. 11), and appears also worn by the two genii on the double-lion statue bases discussed above.[36] The placement of a small rearing lion between the striding man and a larger lion is very reminiscent of the way in which animals are set in between the kilted hero of the Herald's Wall cited just above, with the bull and lion he grasps in hand; while there are also ample parallels for the lion-and-bull combat in which the forequarters of the bull are collapsing.[37] A similar stylization of lion's feet and double-out-lined shoulder can also be found consistently on the reliefs.[38]

As for the pyxis lid, only roughly one-quarter of the original has been preserved, but one can see that depicted on the top in flat relief is the paw of a lion extending over the twisted neck of an animal, probably a bull, with double-outlined shoulder (fig. 13). The border of the lid is again a band of guilloche pattern, and the outer edge is

---

[34] *Carc.* I, Pl. A.la; II, Pl. A.12a; III, Pls. A.24a$_4$ and B.37–43, 46.
[35] Orthmann, *USK*, Pl. 29d.
[36] Ibid., Pls. 26a, 32d and e.
[37] For example, ibid., Pl. 33g.
[38] Ibid., Pl. 26a.

decorated with a design of rosettes within metope panels. As with the pyxides, the decoration on the lid may be directly related to motifs and elements on the Carchemish reliefs. For example, an almost identical scene is represented on a relief from the Inner Court, contemporary in style with works from the Herald's Wall, where a lion mauls a bull whose head twists back toward the lion, and whose shoulder is outlined by a double line (fig. 14).[39] The guilloche has been mentioned above; and the upper rosette border can be compared in both proportion and execution to the similarly-empanelled arrangement of the pattern on the headdress of the goddess Kubaba from the Long Wall procession (fig. 15).[40]

In short, then, these parallels in style and motif between the pyxides and lid on the one hand and the 10th–9th century reliefs from Carchemish on the other, strongly suggest that they all belong to a local tradition of carving which included soft stone for small objects as well as harder stone for architectural reliefs.

Let me state the assumptions underlying this statement quite explicitly: it is assumed that fixed monuments such as major sculpture and architectural relief are most likely to have been carved locally, by local craftsmen, to exemplify the taste of the local population to which the monuments would be directed, unless a viable alternative explanation can be argued on historical grounds (as for Til Barsib above). It is further assumed—even within a relatively unified cultural region such as North Syria/Southeast Anatolia—that subdivisions based upon local variants of the shared "regional style" will be both apparent and describable, despite the many areas of common content and mode of representation (as was the case with the reliefs of Tell Halaf and Zincirli when compared with those of Carchemish above). Therefore, when portable objects—such as the steatite pyxides and lid—are found at a particular site in association with a series of fixed monuments, can be demonstrated to partake of virtually identical properties when compared to those monuments, and can be equally distinguished from fixed monuments of other sites within the same cultural "region", then I would suggest it is a reasonable conclusion that the portable objects were made within the same locale as the larger works.[41]

---

[39] *Carc.* III, Pl. B.57b.

[40] Ibid., Pl. B.39a.

[41] For a special case of the reverse of this situation, see H. J. Kantor, review of *Tell Halaf* III, in *JNES* 15 (1957) 171–4, and further comments in I. J. Winter, North Syria

There are two major consequences of these assumptions. First, they allow one to establish (hypothetical) "workshop" traditions when objects are found at the *same* site. And second, the paradigm may be extended to include objects found at *other* sites, if supporting evidence can be adduced to attribute them back to a particular locale on the basis of their comparison with fixed monuments.

In the present case, we have attempted to posit the first consequence, given the stylistic and thematic parallels between the steatite objects and the reliefs from Carchemish. But there are more far-reaching implications if one pursues the second consequence as well. For, one can also argue for very close parallels between the Carchemish "group" and some of the ivory pyxides and lids in North Syrian style found at Nimrud and elsewhere.

I will discuss the specific details of these parallels in a forthcoming work on the ivories of North Syrian style.[42] Implications of these parallels, however—given the assumptions outlined above—are that a significant group of some of the finest North Syrian pyxides from Nimrud can be argued to belong to a Carchemish orbit (cf. fig. 16).[43]

Such an argument would be consistent with the attested wealth and importance of Carchemish in this period, and may be supported further by relevant textual evidence. Lists of tribute received from Carchemish by Assurnaṣirpal II include finished works of ivory; but even more important, both Assurnaṣirpal and Shalmaneser III actually received tusks as tribute from Sangara, king of Carchemish.[44] The tusks provide us with the evidence that the raw material necessary to stock a local industry was indeed present—presumably supplied either from the Ḫabur basin or from the middle Euphrates, since that is where Assyrian kings record hunting for elephant themselves or receipt of elephants as tribute.[45] Furthermore, I have argued elsewhere that the North Syrian style as a whole can be reasonably sub-divided on the basis of consistent variations in style and subject matter, such that independent

---

in the Early First Millennium B.C., with special reference to Ivory Carving, unpubl. PhD. dissertation, Columbia University, 1973, pp. 350–4.

[42] *North Syria and Ivory Carving*, ms. in progress.

[43] Barnett, *CNI*, S.50.

[44] Grayson, *ARI*, 2, § 584 (Assurnasirpal II); L. W. King, *The Bronze Reliefs from the Gates of Shalmaneser, King of Assyria*, London, 1915, Pl. XXXIII (Shalmaneser III).

[45] Grayson, *ARI*, 2, § 44 (Tiglath Pileser I) and § 681 (Assurnasirpal II).

sub-groups can be matched to different local centres of production.[46] The present suggestion for Carchemish would therefore fit well into the overall pattern of production already suggested for the region: one in which luxury goods, particularly of ivory, were likely not to have been confined to a single specialized centre, but rather to have been produced, with varying degrees of mastery, in most of the prominent cultural and political centres within the North Syrian sphere.[47]

Thus, despite the fact that actual finds of ivory from Carchemish were limited and likely to be post-Assyrian-conquest in date,[48] it is possible—using the steatite pyxides as stylistic and typological analogues and the reliefs as anchors—to argue for the likelihood at least that Carchemish would have been a centre for the production of high-quality ivory goods during the 9th and possibly 8th centuries B.C., along with high-quality small stone goods. And this fits extremely well, both with textual sources that support the presence of ivory materials and tusks, and with the picture generated in relation to the sculpture of the site: that Carchemish would have been a major cultural as well as political centre.

This reconstruction is further supported by the theoretical constructs of modern Central Place Theory: that, while raw materials are collected from the periphery of central places, luxury goods are most economically manufactured at urban centres where consumers congregate or from which goods will be distributed as merchandise, rather than near the sources of raw material itself.[49] One may even press this construct a bit further in the present case. For, if there is a tendency for more luxury goods to be produced at central places of higher order, and if a central place of a higher order is indicated by a greater accumulation of wealth,[50] then the wealthier central places would be the most likely to be producing luxury goods. Since Carchemish was clearly one of the two, if not *the* wealthiest state in North Syria in the 9th century

---

[46] I. J. Winter, "Carved Ivory Furniture Panels from Nimrud: A coherent sub-group of the North Syrian Style," *MMJ* 11 (1977) 25–54.

[47] It should be noted that similar regional production in wood, bone and ivory carving is still attested in North Syria as late as the early 20th century—cf. Franz Werfel, *The Forty Days of Musa Dagh*, Engl. transl, by G. Dunlop, New York, 1934, p. 42.

[48] Cf. *Carc.* III, Pl. 71f., and pp. 167 and 211, as discussed in I. J. Winter, "Phoenician and North Syrian Ivory Carving in Historical Context: Questions of Style and Distribution," *Iraq*, XXXVIII (1976) 16.

[49] Christaller, *Central Places*, p. 20; Haggett, *Locational Analysis*, p. 136.

[50] Christaller, *Central Places*, pp. 28 and 29.

B.C., as will be seen below, then it is certainly theoretically very likely to have also been a significant centre of luxury production, as long as—and we have demonstrated this to be the case—the requisite raw materials were at hand.

We may now proceed to a discussion of the second point to be made in the present study: the significant role of Carchemish as an economic and trading centre in the early first millennium B.C. As noted above, the tribute lists included in inscriptions of Assurnaṣirpal II and Shalmaneser III can be used to provide evidence for ivory and ivory production located at Carchemish. In addition, a careful reading of these lists of tribute, the collection of which constituted a major source of Assyrian revenue in the 9th century,[51] can provide further information about the particular wealth controlled by the tributary state, and about the types of resources to which it had access.[52]

For example, it is clear that during the reign of Assurnaṣirpal, Carchemish and Patina in the ʿAmuq provided the most abundant tribute of the North Syrian states.[53] In many respects, the two give quite comparable amounts: both provide 20 talents of silver; one talent of gold from Patina is matched by a gold ring, gold bracelet and gold daggers from Carchemish; 100 talents of tin from Patina is balanced against 100 talents of bronze from Carchemish; both give linen garments with multicoloured trim, beds, thrones, couches and dishes (?) of boxwood or inlaid with ivory. However, Carchemish also gives a large number of goods not mentioned for Patina: a quantity of bronze pails, tubs and other vessels; alabaster; the elephant tusks cited above; a chariot of gold; and a gold inlaid couch. In addition, Carchemish provides two and a half times more iron (250 talents as opposed to 100), while Patina gives oxen and sheep that Carchemish does not.

Assuming that these commodities were accurately recorded, the differences noted can only be explained in terms of differing access

---

[51] See H. Tadmor, "Assyria and the West: The ninth century and its aftermath," in *Unity and Diversity*, eds. H. Goedicke and J. J. M. Roberts, Baltimore and London, 1975, p. 37.

[52] This was attempted on a gross, regional level by N. B. Jankowska, "Some Problems of the Economy of the Assyrian Empire," in *Ancient Mesopotamia*, I. Diakonoff, ed., Moscow, 1969, pp. 253–76; R. Maxwell-Hyslop has culled references specifically to iron, in "Assyrian Sources of Iron: A preliminary survey of the historical and geographical evidence," *Iraq*, XXXVI (1974) 139–54.

[53] *ARI 2*, § 584.

to resources. The 'Amuq offered an extensive pasture land for flocks that Carchemish did not command. Presumably both states had access to sources of silver, presumably in the Taurus, while the tin given by Patina was probably its most valued resource. The quantity of bronze and iron offered by Carchemish surely suggests unrestricted access up the Euphrates to the copper and iron of Ergani Maden and other rich sites in the eastern Taurus.[54] Nor can the greater amount of tribute paid by Carchemish be explained merely in terms of the state having been the more coerced by Assyrian forces. Rather the contrary, as no battles are recorded, and Sangara is never described as "taking fright" before Assurnaṣirpal in the same way as Lubarna of Patina, while Sangara's gifts of a gold ring and gold bracelet are far more appropriately seen as personal tokens to one perceived as an equal.[55] Therefore, I feel we may assume that Carchemish was the wealthier and the more powerful of the two.

In the succeeding reign of Shalmaneser III, we find the two North Syrian states much closer to equal, except that now Patina provides three times more iron than Carchemish.[56] It is possible that this may be a consequence of Shalmaneser's campaign of 858 against the North Syrian coalition, in which he not only marched across Kummuḫ, due north of Carchemish on the Euphrates, on his way to Sam'al, but seems also to have bound Kummuḫ into a client status with Assyria.[57] At any rate, the state took no part in the subsequent battle, and it is likely that the political vicissitudes of Kummuḫ affected the northerly access of Carchemish to its former metal sources. Nevertheless, Carchemish still appears to have had a significant stockpile of metal goods, as the state does provide 500 (presumably iron) weapons to Shalmaneser, as contrasted with 1000 copper vessels provided by Patina.[58]

---

[54] See map in Maxwell-Hyslop, *Iraq*, XXXVI, Pl. XX and p. 148.

[55] The best documented parallels for this exchange are those preserved in the Amarna correspondance, cf. C. Zaccagnini, *Lo Scambio dei doni nel vicino oriente durante i secoli XV–XIII* [Orientis Antiquii Collectio—XI], Rome 1973, esp. Ch. IV: L'articolazione sociale, pp. 183–4, for discussion of gifts to or between "Great Kings," including weapons, jewellery and chariots.

[56] Luckenbill, *ARAB* I, § 601 (Kurkh Monolith).

[57] "Ibid., § 599; and see Hawkins, *Iraq*, XXXVI, pp. 79–80.

[58] The large quantity of copper vessels from Patina, seen in conjunction with Cypriote pottery found in 'Amuq sites just at this time and the corresponding intensity of activity at coastal Al Mina which begins in the third quarter of the 9th century (J. Du Plat-Taylor, "The Cypriote and Syrian Pottery from Al-Mina, Syria," *Iraq*, XXI (1959) 62–92), suggest that Patina may have recently acquired access to Cypriote

Unfortunately, later Assyrian kings were not as precise in listing spe-
cific commodities in association with specific places;[59] but on the basis of
the 9th century accounts, it may be suggested that a major source of the
wealth of Carchemish was related to its access north and west to the rich
metal deposits of Anatolia, and particularly to sources of iron.[60]

Despite the fact that we do not have an extensive body of texts directly
attesting to trade in metals (or any other commodity) at this time, we
can only assume that trade was the basis for the acquisition of these
resources.[61] This may be supported by circumstantial evidence: first,
as Carchemish cannot be demonstrated either to have these resources
within its own political territory or have acquired them by conquest;
and second, on the grounds of the coastal installation at Al Mina, near
the mouth of the Orontes, which—whether inhabited predominantly by
Greeks, Cypriotes or Syrians—cannot be explained on any other basis
than as a funnel for North Syrian goods and resources moving west
and Aegean goods and resources moving east in an extended exchange
network that had to include the major North Syrian states as suppliers
if not active merchants.[62]

Further evidence can be adduced in support of this reconstruction.
The occurrence of Carchemish in an Ebla text of the mid-third millen-
nium in a form indicating the etymology of its name to be *kār-kamiš*, or
kārum of K., "Quay of (the god) Kamiš," attests to the "trading-station"
nature of the site at that time.[63] The prominent role of Carchemish
in trade and commercial activities is also attested for the second mil-

---

copper, which then accounted for a large portion of its wealth. Archaeological evidence
thus supports the details given in the Assyrian tribute lists of 9th century kings, and
encourages us to put some weight on their veracity.

[59] See, for example, the accounts of Tiglath-pileser III which include only generalized
lists of tribute or booty from a group of subservient rulers—*ARAB*, I, §§ 772, 801.

[60] In addition to the study of Maxwell-Hyslop on Assyrian sources of iron, cited
above, fn. 79, see also S. Mazzoni, "Gli Stati siro-ittiti e l'"eta'oscura": fattori geo-eco-
nomici di un sviluppo culturale," *Egitto e Vicino Oriente*, IV (1981) 311–41, esp. 324–5,
in which the wealth of all of the North Syrian states are attributed to their proximity
to sources of metal.

[61] See now, Hawkins and Morpurgo-Davies, in *Festschrift Günter Neumann*, pp. 94–5
and 98–9, where at least we have the Neo-Hittite Luwian words for buying and selling,
and transactions of land-sale are attested (*in re* Carc. A.4a), if not "trade".

[62] See on this, C. Roebuck, *Ionian Trade and Colonization*, New York, 1959; J. Board-
man, *The Greeks Overseas* (2nd edition), Baltimore, 1980.

[63] Hawkins, "Karkamiš," *RLA* V, p. 426, citing G. Pettinato, "Carchemiš—Kār-
Kamiš," *Or. Ant.*, 15(1976) 11–15.

lennium, in texts from Mari, Ras Shamra and Boğazköy,[64] and it is hardly likely that such activity would cease without some extensive historical explanation, which cannot be provided before the conquest of Carchemish by Sargon II in 717. In addition, the "Carchemish mina" was not only a known weight standard in the early first millennium; it was actually adopted in Assyria during the 8th century B.C. As early as 1901, Johns had noted that all of Shalmaneser III's minas conformed to the heavy standard; the light (Carchemish) mina was first adopted by Tiglath-pileser III[65]—precisely at a time when the West was having a very strong impact on Assyria that included the increasing use of Aramaic as a *lingua franca* and many elements in the visual arts as well.[66] The Carchemish mina was subsequently used under Sargon and Sennacherib also. Sargon was the first ruler to apply the phrase "of the king" to the light mina, possibly related to the conquest and incorporation of Carchemish into the empire during his reign. The occasional specification on weights: "mina of the merchant", instead of "mina of Carchemish", further attests to the commercial activities of the state as the basis for the weight standard's adoption in Assyria. And finally, one of the Harper letters, *ABL* 186, written by an official of the Assyrian king (probably Esarhaddon) at Nineveh, refers to the murder of a "merchant, a native of Carchemish."[67] It is not unfounded to suppose, therefore, that at least in this period, Carchemish had generated a class of merchants, and that some of them resided outside of their native city, presumably engaged in their profession.[68]

---

[64] Cf. J. Sasson, "A Sketch of North Syrian Economic Relations in the Middle Bronze Age," *JESHO 9* (1966) 161–81; G. Dossin, "Aplaḫanda, roi de Carkemiš," *RA* 35 (1938) 115–21; H. Klengel, *Geschichte Syriens im 2 Jahrtausend v. u. Z.*, Teil I—Nordsyrien (D. Akad. der Wiss. zu Berlin, Institut für Orientforschung, Veröffentlichung Nr. 40), Berlin 1965.

[65] C. H. W. Johns, *Assyrian Deeds and Documents*, Cambridge, 1901, pp. 264, 268–70. And cf. *CAD* 'M', vol. I (1977), *manû*, p. 220: Al.b, citing *ADD* 35:3 & 41:2.

[66] See on this most recently, P. Garelli, "Importance et role des Araméens dans l'administration de l'empire assyrien," in *Mesopotamien unde seine Nachbarn* [RAI XXV, Berlin 1978], eds. H.-J. Nissen and J. Renger, Berlin, 1982, pp. 437–8; H. Tadmor, "The Aramaization of Assyria: Aspects of Western Impact," in ibid., pp. 449–70; and I. Winter, "Art as Evidence for Interaction: Relations between the Assyrian Empire and North Syria," in ibid., pp. 355–82.

[67] L. Waterman, *Royal Correspondence of the Assyrian Empire*, Ann Arbor, 1930–36, no. 186.

[68] Another, unfortunately unspecified reference to natives of Carchemish residing in the Assyrian capital is to be found in the "Nimrud Wine-lists," (J. V. Kinnier-Wilson, *The Nimrud Wine Lists*, London, 1972, p. 91, dated to the reign of Adad-nirari III). Rather than being prisoners of war, as suggested by Kinnier-Wilson (pp. 91, 93), Tadmor has

Thus, a picture of the productivity and the economic role of Carchemish as a state, prior to Assyrian conquest, begins to emerge. The state was likely to have been engaged in the production of sculpture and of small luxury goods—both artisans and resulting objects likely moving beyond the limits of the city as well. The abundance of metal vessels and weapons given to Assyria as tribute suggests stockpiling, if not production in metal. Large quantities of raw metal given as tribute further suggest access to and exploitation of resources at some remove from Carchemish. Such acquisition could only have been based on trade. The commercial role of Carchemish is further attested by the prominence of the Carchemish weight system, and its ultimate adoption by Assyria, and the existence of individuals known as merchants from the city.

The favourable geographical position of Carchemish—both on the Euphrates and with easy access to land routes—certainly was a significant factor in facilitating this trade. Once again, modern economic theory would emphasize the importance of routes in the formation of a significant "central place," providing both access to resources and also means of subsequent distribution of goods—i.e., the redistribution of the raw materials plus the marketing of added products of local manufacture.[69] And in addition, control of routes and particularly river crossings is itself likely to generate wealth, in the form of quay and crossing fees for parties moving across the territory.[70]

The prominence of Carchemish due to the routes and resources it commanded, and its resultant wealth, must be fully understood in order to assess properly the role played by the state in the history of the early first millennium B.C. Further, I would suggest that it is only through an understanding of these factors that one can properly evaluate Assyrian policy with respect to Carchemish, and indeed with respect to the entire westward expansion of the Assyrian Empire at this time.

We may now come to the third and last point of the present article. For, once one sees Carchemish as a crucial factor in Assyrian foreign

---

speculated that these may be merchants, along with others of foreign origin included in the same list (*Unity and Diversity*, p. 42).

[69] Christaller, *Central Places*, pp. 20, 42.

[70] It is presumably for this reason that Sargon II grants the city of Assur freedom from quay duties in the so-called "Assur Charter" (H. W. F. Saggs, "Historical Texts and Fragments of Sargon II of Assyria I: The 'Assur Charter'," *Iraq*, XXXVII (1975) p. 17, 11. 36a, 38a, 36b) as a special privilege, in order to "make (his) dynasty firm."

policy in the 9th and 8th centuries B.C., an astounding number of facts and events fall into place.

In his initial move westward, Assurnaṣirpal II marched across Bit Adini, collecting tribute en route; then forded the Euphrates in flood, crossing into the land of Carchemish. Presumably he used the Carchemish crossing itself, as he does not report any other; and once on the west bank, he received the tribute of its ruler, Sangara.[71] Although Assurnaṣirpal subsequently engages in a number of skirmishes in Patina, he does not seem to directly engage Carchemish in any military encounter, and one must wonder if this is not because he considered Carchemish too powerful an adversary to take on in this initial foray.

That his interests were at least in part commercial, and that he was thinking long-term of means for tapping directly the sources of Syrian wealth without being dependant upon continued enforced tribute, has been suggested by Tadmor as the only plausible explanation for the establishment of a "colony" of resident Assyrians at Aribua, a city of Patina, after its capture.[72]

These three phenomena: the collection of raw materials and goods as tribute, the planting of an Assyrian population well beyond areas of Assyrian political control to tap into these goods and resources, and the avoidance of any direct confrontation with Carchemish, all provide perspective for the actions of Shalmaneser III.

Shalmaneser also avoids a head-on confrontation with Carchemish; in fact, he seems to do his best to avoid Carchemish altogether. In his first campaign against the North Syrian coalition, he crosses the Euphrates to the north, his itinerary leading him through the state of Kummuḫ into Gurgum and down to Sam'al.[73] The next series of campaigns waged

---

[71] Grayson, *ARI*, 2, § 584; and see fn. 12.

[72] In *Unity and Diversity*, p. 37, re *ARI*, 2, § 585.

[73] See on this the itinerary provided in the Kurkh monolith of Shalmaneser III (*ARAB*, I, § 599), and the comments thereon by N. Na'aman, "Two Notes on the Monolith Inscription of Shalmaneser III from Kurkh," *Tel Aviv*, 3 (1976) 89–106, esp. pp. 92–7. The next major crossing of the Euphrates north of Carchemish is Birecik; however, there is no direct evidence that the Birecik crossing was at that time part of Kummuḫ, and not at the northern reaches of the territory controlled by Carchemish. With the discovery of a rock relief of Shalmaneser III on the west bank, near Kenk Gorge, north of Birecik, at a place where even today it is relatively easy to cross the river by goat-skin raft, we must consider this crossing as well (cf. O. A. Taşyürek, "A Rock Relief of Shalmaneser III on the Euphrates," *Iraq*, XLI (1979), 47–54), although the relief itself was carved after this campaign, as the inscription refers to Shalmaneser's third campaign and the taking of Til Barsib (ibid., p. 49). Finally, if Hawkins is right in connecting the mound of Samsat with Neo-Babylonian Kimuḫi and Assyrian Kummuḫ

by the Assyrian king in the West were against Bit Adini, culminating in the taking of Til Barsib on the east bank of the Euphrates and the re-naming of it as Kar-Shalmaneser, the king's own port.[74]

The two sets of campaigns must be seen together to understand what is happening to Carchemish at this time. Again, Carchemish itself is likely to have been too formidable an opponent to engage. Shalmaneser does claim the destruction of several of Sangara's dependent cities;[75] but as long as the Assyrian king had control of alternate routes west, he could leave Carchemish alone.

The northern alternative, Kummuḫ, not only afforded uncontested passage to the armies of Shalmaneser, but in addition, took no part in the battle, providing tribute in 858, 857 and again in 853.[76] The neutral, if not "client" status of Kummuḫ had to have been very important to Assyria. That state's control of strategic river crossings provided the Assyrians with both access to the northwestern routes toward Gurgum and down the "back corridor" into Syria, and also access into the resources of the Taurus—since the same metals of value to Carchemish would have been sought by the Assyrians as well, particularly iron.[77] The southern alternative, Bit Adini, was equally essential. Not only did the Til Barsib crossing give the Assyrians a direct route west while by-passing Carchemish, but here, too, Tadmor would impute economic as well as strategic motives, suggesting that the very use of the term kāru(m) for the new installation had to convey the traditional connotations of associated trading activity in addition to its literal meaning of "quay," "port" or "harbour."[78]

This combination of Assyrian alliance with or domination over Kummuḫ and the securing of Til Barsib served as a serious check on the power of Carchemish, boxing that state in between areas of Assyrian control. The consequences of this for Carchemish would have been threefold. First, it was likely to have limited the direct access of Carchemish to the Anatolian metal sources that were a significant basis of its wealth—as partially indicated by the amounts of iron available in

---

("Kummuḫ", *RLA*, VI/5–6), then Shalmaneser could have crossed well to the North. Somehow, for arrival in Gurgum, however, this does not seem the most efficient route, and one would prefer to seek a more direct road via either Birecik or Kenk Gorge.

[74] *ARAB* 1., § 599.
[75] Ibid., §'s 559, 567, 601.
[76] Ibid., §'s 599, 601, 610.
[77] Cf. Maxwell-Hyslop, *Iraq*, XXXVI, pp. 148–9.
[78] Tadmor, *Unity and Diversity*, p. 38.

the tribute list of Shalmaneser—while at the same time giving Assyria independent access into the Taurus. Second, with an Assyrian installation at Til Barsib, access to the south could have been limited for traffic coming out of Carchemish, while interruption or heavy taxing of river traffic moving up from the south would also have cut into the economic life of the state, as would the provision of an alternative river-crossing that would deprive Carchemish of the duties constituting another of its sources of wealth. A third consequence would have been the isolation of Carchemish from former allies within North Syria. With not only Kummuḫ and Bit Adini, but also Bit-Agusi and Patina under the suzerainty of Assyria by the end of the reign of Shalmaneser III, Carchemish would have been forced to seek political alliance with lands well beyond its own borders—particularly to the northeast and northwest—in order to maintain its independent position with respect to Assyria.

Evidence that this last was indeed the case may be inferred from subsequent historical records. Carchemish would have had every reason to welcome the realignment of Kummuḫ with Urartu during the complex and apparently weak period for Assyria that followed the death of Shalmaneser.[79] That same period seems to have found not only an Urartean political presence in North Syria generally,[80] but perhaps even a direct connection between Urartu and Carchemish. At least, Yariris boasts of his linguistic and scribal abilities, including possibly

---

[79] Sarduri II (*ca.* 764–735 B.C.) was able to defeat Malatya, and then impose vassalage upon Kuštašpi of Kummuḫ, after destroying the latter king's royal city of Halpa (modern Halfeti) on the Euphrates (cf. F. W. König, *Handbuch der chaldischen Inschriften* [AfO Beiheft, 8] Graz, 1955–57, p. 124, Inscr. 103, rev. pt. 9, § iv). See also, Hawkins, *Iraq* XXXVI, p. 80; and M. van Loon, "The Euphrates Mentioned by Sarduri II of Urartu," in *Anatolian Studies Presented to Hans Gustav Güterbock*, ed. K. ßittel, Istanbul 1974, pp. 187–94.

[80] There seem to have been no campaigns south of Kummuḫ, but this is not to deny the influence of Urartu upon the rest of North Syria during this time. Rather, it took a form other than military intervention—i.e., political alliance. In a fragment of a treaty found at Nineveh that may be part of a treaty between Assur-nirari V of Assyria and Mati'el of Arpad, the state immediately to the south and southeast of Carchemish in the 8th century, it is announced that: "…if the Urartean envoys come, you shall not receive them…" (A. R. Millard, "Fragments of Historical Texts from Nineveh," *Iraq* XXXII [1970] 174). Clearly, then, the diplomatic presence of Urartu was a reality that had to be addressed. Similarly, when Tiglath-pileser III began at the beginning of his reign to reclaim the North Syrian territories, he found Urartu allied with most of those states against him (Luckenbill, *ARAB* I, § 769 and §§ 797, 813).

Urartean;[81] and this connection, plus the re-establishment of access into the Taurus it would have afforded, would provide a good context in which to view the renewed prosperity and building activity under Yariris and his ward, Kamanas.

In the same text, Yariris also states that he was known among the Lydians and the Phrygians;[82] and it was the apparent political overtures from Carchemish to Phrygia that were taken by Sargon II as a pretext for finally invading the state in 717.[83] The reconstruction of an "Urartean connection" and a "Phrygian connection" for Carchemish in the 8th century B.C. thus becomes meaningful, not as isolated or accidental phenomena, but rather as aspects of highly-organized policy, as Carchemish attempted to secure its resources and maintain its economic and political life in opposition to Assyrian expansion.

In the period between the regency of Yariris at Carchemish and the conquest by Sargon II, Tiglath-pileser III had systematically re-taken those North Syrian states which had fallen away from the domination of Assyria during the first half of the 8th century, pushing Urartu back into the highlands, and re-organizing the West into a series of provinces and vassal states.[84] By the end of the reign of Tiglath-pileser, with the conquest of Unki/Patina and Arpad and the submissive status of Sam'al, Kummuḫ and Bit Adini, Carchemish was again (and this time, irrevocably) isolated from its former network of allies and resources. Assyrian accounts seem to suggest a canny strategy designed precisely to isolate the state and wear it down. One must then see the overtures of the last king, Pisiris, to Mita of Mushki (Phrygia) as a last desperate attempt to keep connections up on the Anatolian plateau, as well as

---

[81] Cf. Hawkins, *Anat. Stud.* XXV, p. 150, Appendix 2, re Carchemish A.15b, 4; and *Anat. Stud.* XXIX, p. 157. Although the passage is badly damaged, it is also possible that Yariris came into direct conflict with Assyria at this time; at least, he refers to the Assyrian king (carrying?) away the Storm-God of Aleppo, at which time he (the Storm-God) retaliated against the land of Assyria (with fire?)—cf. Hawkins, *Iraq*, XXXVI, p. 72, *re* Carchemish A.24, and personal communication regarding the final logogram for a word generally meaning "red", hence, fire(?). A second fragment, A.6, refers to one "[X]-atanas, Assyrian king," which *may* refer to Assur-dan—ibid., p. 73. At any rate, conflict with Assyria at a time when Carchemish was allied with Urartu would not be unexpected.

[82] Hawkins, *Iraq*, XXXVI, p. 68; *Anat. Stud.* XXV, pp. 150, 152.

[83] Luckenbill, *ARAB* II, § 8.

[84] Cf. reference in fn. 80; and discussion in M. Astour, "The Arena of Tiglath-pileser III's Campaign against Sarduri II (743 B.C.)," in *Aššur*, Vol. 2, No. 3 (October, 1979).

an attempt to organize common cause with a state not yet subsumed, but equally threatened by, Assyria.

A situation similar to that of Carchemish is recorded in the Cylinder Inscription of Sargon, describing Ambaris of Tabal, who "put his trust in the king of Urartu and the land of Mushki (with their) powerful armies."[85] In other words, Carchemish was not the only state among those still holding out from Assyria to have counted on alliances with Urartu and Phrygia.

It is telling that the years following the taking of Carchemish were devoted to campaigns against the more recent allies of the state: against Urartu, which resulted in the well-known destruction of Muṣaṣir in 714; and then, in 709, raids against Mita of Mushki, led by the Assyrian governor of Que, which resulted in the first overtures of tribute from Phrygia to Assyria.[86] The important letter written by Sargon to his governor in Que in year 12 or 13, further illustrates this phase in political relations—making reference with pleasure to the overtures of Mita, and at the same time commenting upon the interception by the governor of a (presumably subversive) embassy sent by the former ruler of Que to Urartu.[87] This reference, plus the one to Ambaris of Tabal, in effect strengthens the view that the earlier activities of Carchemish should be seen as part of a larger picture of concerted political efforts to resist Assyrian domination.

With the capture of Carchemish, the territory was annexed at last to Assyria, an Assyrian governor established over the city, the king and rebels carried off, and Assyrians settled in their place.[88] Although bricks found in a Roman hearth on the acropolis, inscribed "Palace of Sargon, king of nations, king of Assyria," and a single Assyrian-style

---

[85] *ARAB* II, § 118; & see, also Display Inscriptions from Khorsabad, ibid., § 55.

[86] *ARAB* II, §§ 12–22, 42–3, 71.

[87] Cf. most recent publication by J. N. Postgate, "Assyrian Texts and Fragments," *Iraq*, XXXIV (1972) 90–8.

[88] A brief account of the capture of Carchemish is given in the annals, inscribed on the walls of Sargon's palace at Khorsabad (*ARAB* II, § 8), and on a prism-fragment found at Nimrud in 1952 (C. J. Gadd, "An Inscribed Prism of Sargon II from Nimrud," *Iraq*, XVI (1954) 173–201). The longest account was on a basalt slab from Nimrud which stood at the entrance to Room U of the Northwest Palace of Assurnaṣirpal, restored by Sargon, in which the treasures of Pisiris of Carchemish were said to have been stored (cf. *ARAB* II, §§ 137–8, and Gadd *Iraq*, XVI, p. 181). Sargon's rage at the "evil words, lies and vile talk" spread by Pisiris about Assyria which led to the attack, annexation of the territory and establishment of a governor over the people of Carchemish, has been discussed by Tadmor ("The Campaigns of Sargon II of Assyria: a chronological-historical study," *JCS* 12 (1958) 22–3).

relief fragment, are the only certain evidence that Sargon ever built at Carchemish,[89] the taking of the city and the installation of an Assyrian governor must have afforded enormous satisfaction as well as security to the Assyrian king. By Sargon's death in 705, the North Syrian states and most of the trans-Taurus states as well had been tightly bound into the administrative system of the Assyrian Empire. The important question underlying all these events is then whether there had been reasons other than mere "snowballing expansion"[90] dictating Assyrian policy, and how those reasons related specifically to Carchemish.

I have cited Tadmor, and martialled what evidence there is, to argue that Assyria's interest in the West was commercial as well as territorial.[91] I have further suggested elsewhere that one explanation for the lengthy focus on North Syria, particularly Carchemish, was competition for the land routes which provided access to metal resources—hence, direct commercial competition.[92] That the restriction of commercial activity unfavourable to Assyria was a factor in later treaties is evident in the agreement between Esarhaddon of Assyria and the Phoenician city of Tyre.[93] Yet, with the Phoenician cities, until revolt made it absolutely necessary, their viable economic life was not dismantled, presumably because they had access to the sea trade for which Assyria was not equipped on her own. With regard to the North Syrian states, particularly Carchemish, by contrast, the Assyrian administrative machine could easily take over control of the land routes, and therefore had no similar need to maintain their independent economic activity.

---

[89] *Carc.* III, pp. 211, 265. A fragmentary cuneiform text that seems to be part of an Assyrian royal inscription and may well belong to Sargon is also published (ibid., pp. 265 and 280, and Pl. A.33m). J. D. Hawkins confirms (personal communication) that this is a fragment of an annalistic account, most likely belonging to Sargon if compared to other known inscriptions, such as his Hamath stele. The only distinctive phrase preserved is 1.4: NU-MU-*SA-puratti*, lit. "Widow of the Euphrates," which could conceivably refer to Carchemish after its conquest.

[90] W. G. Lambert, "The Reigns of Assurnaṣirpal II and Shalmaneser III: An interpretation," *Iraq*, XXXVI (1974) 106.

[91] Such a reading for the West can perhaps be supported further by arguments martialled for trade as the primary motivating force behind military and political actions by both Assyria and Urartu in the East as well (cf. L. D. Levine, "East-West Trade in the Late Iron Age: A view from the Zagros," in *Le plateau iranien et l'Asie centrale des origines á la conquête islamique* [Colloques internationaux du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, No. 567], Paris, 1976, pp. 171–86.

[92] Winter, *Iraq*, XXXVIII (1976) 20.

[93] R. Borger, *Die Inschriften Asarhaddons, Königs von Assyrien* (*AfO*, Beiheft 9), Graz 1956, pp. 107–9.

From later correspondence, it would appear that the area—despite the former prestige of the Carchemish mina and the state's likely economic role—was essentially turned to agricultural production.[94] In any event, Carchemish itself was not entirely destroyed, as witnessed not only by the albeit meagre evidence for Sargonid building on the citadel, but also by the fact that two governors of Carchemish are attested in the Eponym lists for 691 and 649 B.C.[95]

In fact, Carchemish still survived to be attacked by Nebuchadrezzar, in the power struggles between Egypt and Babylon at the very end of the 7th century B.C.[96] That the geographical position of Carchemish remained strategically important is suggested by its selection as the base of Egyptian operations in this stand; and not less by the modern Ottoman railroad bridge that bisects the site to cross the Euphrates today. But with the capture of 717, the state ceased to conduct its own affairs, or to control its own destiny.

In conclusion, I would suggest that of all the states of North Syria and Southeast Anatolia, it is Carchemish that held the position of primary economic importance prior to Assyrian take-over; and I would further suggest that Carchemish played a pivotal role in the determination of Assyrian military policy up to its capture. As had been the case in the second millennium against the Hittites,[97] Carchemish was the last major North Syrian state to hold out against an enemy with territorial ambitions. Ultimately, the state had to succumb to the military force of Assyria—it did not have the hinterland to muster large armies. Indeed, the North Syrian states had never been able to organize successfully into large political-cum-military entities, but rather functioned best as independent centres, their wealth derived mainly from position, access and resultant trade, and their power vested rather in the establishment of strongly-bonded networks of interrelations. Military coalitions were

---

[94] Cf. H. W. F. Saggs, "The Nimrud Letters, 1952—Part VII," *Iraq*, XXVII (1965) 27, *re* ND 2671, regarding the failure of the grain crop in the region of the border between Arpad and Kummuḫ; also, Waterman, *Royal Correspondence*, letters 500 and 1082, with reference to grain production in Adini and Hatti; and discussion thereof in Winter, Unpublished PhD. diss., "North Syria in the Early First Millennium B.C., pp. 457–8.

[95] Hawkins, *RLA*, V/6, "Karkamiš," p. 445, § 16.

[96] Ibid., p. 446.

[97] See H. Klengel, *Geschichte Syriens im 2 Jahrtausend v. u. Z., Teil I—Nordsyrien* (D. Akad. der Wiss. zu Berlin, Institüt für Orientforschung, Veröffentlichung Nr. 40) Berlin, 1965.

attempted in the face of Assyrian pressure; but as individual states were picked off one by one, it was ultimately only a matter of time before Carchemish as well became too vulnerable to withstand absorption.

Thus, we must see the period up to 717 B.C. as one of the gradual wearing down of Carchemish. When we first met the state through Assyrian sources in the early 9th century B.C., it was at the height of its power, its prosperity and status reflected in the tribute provided to Neo-Assyrian kings and in its architectural monuments, which constitute the most complete sequence of any of the North Syrian states. In addition, study of the reliefs of Carchemish in comparison with works from other sites leads us to propose that the artistic workshops of Carchemish either greatly influenced or even provided workmen for monuments from other states.[98]

On the basis of the foregoing analysis, Carchemish was not only a centre of Neo-Hittite/Luwian culture and cultural production, but also a centre of economic activity—including the manufacture of luxury goods and the acquisition, processing and distribution of major metal resources. As such, until incorporation by Assyria, Carchemish meets all of the requirements for a "central place": a supportive hinterland of agricultural production and subordinate settlements; radial routes of access and control of traffic; access to resources; production of central goods and services, with its corollary, art production and a distinctive aesthetic; influence, wealth, status and power.

The art work provides the basis for the primary theoretical conclusion to be drawn from the particular case of Carchemish. For, since Central Place Theory derives from economic geography, emphasis has been on the production of *goods* rather than *art*. However, what is "art" here, if not on the one hand luxury goods (i.e., the pyxides and whatever decorated metal vessels and textiles that have not been preserved except in text), and on the other hand political and/or religious goods (i.e. public monuments, the messages of which are carried in visual rather than verbal form). So that, on the basis of the foregoing discussion, one might say that, if our reconstruction of the role of Carchemish with respect to sculpture and luxury production is correct, we may add another dimension to the definition of the primate centre: one

---

[98] In fact, once it was clear that the reliefs of Suhis II and Katuwas were to be dated prior to Assurnaṣirpal, it became a possibility that Carchemish itself, if not North Syria in general, could have served as a stimulus for the very development of Assyrian architectural relief (cf. Winter, in *Mesopotamien und seine Nachbarn*, p. 356).

in which art is (*a*) likely to be produced and consumed; (*b*) likely not to be derivative once the state is fully established; and (*c*) likely to be exported, in the form of goods, craftsmen or "influence".

Developing centres may well incorporate external elements as they move to forge an appropriate visual vocabulary; but they will ultimately assimilate the stimuli and make of them their own.[99] Once established, mature centres may well continue to import luxury goods, art works, and even craftsmen for their own "display" purposes; and they may periodically absorb external stimuli at significant historical moments as well.[100] But they will also be producing and exporting works and craftsmen; and will export their "aesthetic" through these works and craftsmen, to the extent that elements of their style and/or iconography are absorbed elsewhere. The degree of "influence" exerted by such centres will be in direct proportion to the prominence of the centre, the quality of its goods, the extent of its "interaction sphere", and the varying degrees of dependence and receptivity of its clients; while it is essentially the centre's own "aesthetic" that will dominate at home.

As a primary historical conclusion, once we acknowledge the role trade had to have played in the economic life of Carchemish, we are led to see the state as a significant factor in Assyrian policy, and conversely, to see Assyrian policy as a primary factor in the determination of strategies at Carchemish.

At the beginning, assuming our reading of the gifts proferred to Assurnaṣirpal by Sangara to be correct, the king of Carchemish seemed to be attempting to deal as an equal with another "great king". If subsequently Carchemish seemed to set itself, more than any other North Syrian state, in opposition to Assyria—allying with Urartu to the northeast and with Phrygia to the northwest up to the very last minute of conquest by Sargon II—it seems likely that this was the case precisely because Carchemish, as the most powerful of the North Syrian states, had the most to lose in incorporation by Assyria. And these fears would have been well-grounded. Principles of economic competition demanded that Assyria ultimately reduce the position enjoyed by Carchemish once the state was taken. For, only when its

---

[99] Ibid., pp. 357, 364–5.
[100] E.g., Assyria under Tiglath-pileser III and again under Sennacherib, cf. Ibid., pp. 366–7.

former activities and sources of wealth had been diverted to Assyria could the larger kingdom itself assume the "centre".

Carchemish *ša kišad puratti* was thus subsumed into the Assyrian Empire: the seat of a provincial governor, whose status ranked well below the governor of neighbouring Til Barsib; the river crossing it once commanded reduced to one of several; its weight system and trade transferred to Assyria; its luxury production curtailed, as artisans presumably moved to where the power and patronage now lay. And to the prophet Isaiah (Isa. X:9) barely 20 years later, Carchemish was just one more of the Syrian states whose fate was held up to Judah as a warning of what one could expect at the hands of Assyria.

[*Addendum.* A fragment of the lower part of the Carchemish statue referred to on p. 182 (with footnote 26)—showing fringed garment hem, tassel falling from belt, and feet on low plinth originally socketed to the base—has been mentioned without illustration by H. G. Güterbock, *Guide to the Hittite Museum in the Bedesten at Ankara* (Istanbul, 1946), pp. 61–2, which strongly supports the suggestion of direct parallels—if not identity—with the Zincirli figure. I am grateful to Professor Güterbock for calling this fragment to my attention.]

Figure 1. View of Carchemish, from East bank of the Euphrates looking northwest. (*Photo courtesy The British Museum*).
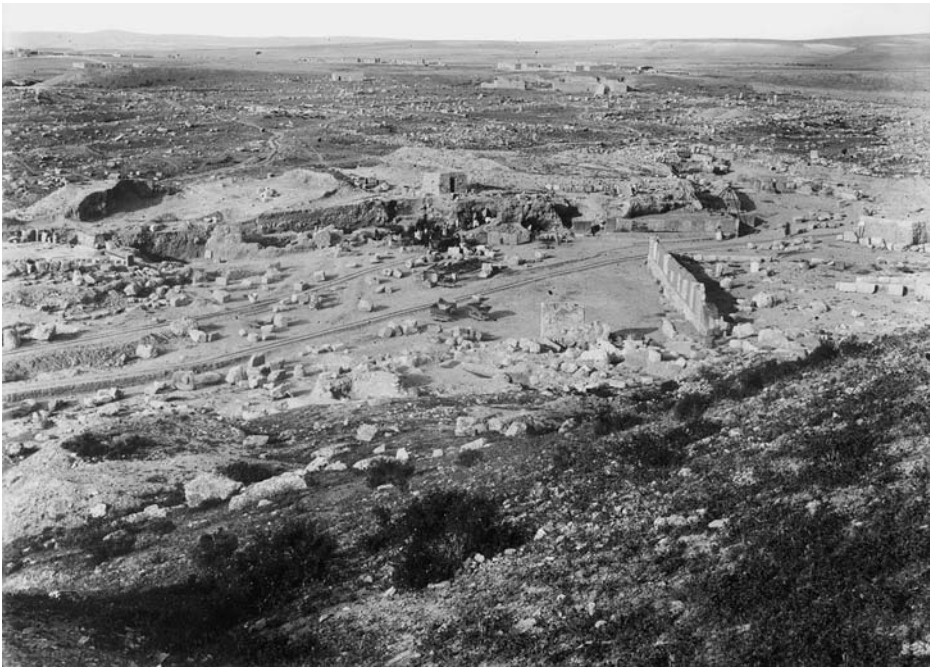
Figure 2. View from the citadel of Carchemish looking south, including ruins of the Inner Town, Outer Town and the Plain of Jerablus. (*Photo courtesy The British Museum*).

Figure 3. Til Barsib, Stele A of Hamiyatas.
(*Louvre AO 11501; photo courtesy of
M. Pierre Amiet, Musée du Louvre*).

Figure 4. Til Barsib, Stele B of the son of
Ariyahina. (*Aleppo, inv. 2; photo courtesy J. D.
Hawkins*).
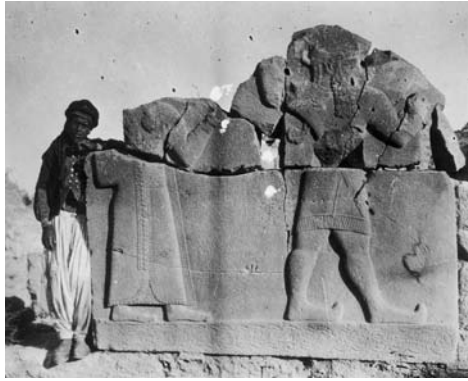
Figure 5. Carchemish, Storm God and Goddess, relief from the Long Wall of Suhis II. (*Ankara 104; photo courtesy The British Museum*).

Figure 6. Carchemish, Two Gods slaying Lion, relief from the Herald's Wall. (*Ankara 9666 + BM 117909; photo courtesy The British Museum*).

Figure 7. Carchemish, Bull-base, Temple of the Storm God of Katuwas. (*Ankara 10103; photo courtesy The British Museum*).

Figure 8. Carchemish, small steatite pyxis. (*BM 116123; photo courtesy The British Museum*).

a.

b.

c.

Figure 9, a–c. Carchemish, large steatite pyxis. (*BM 116122; photos courtesy The British Museum*). Roll-out drawing, by the author.

Figure 10. Carchemish, Lion vs. Bull, relief from the Herald's Wall.
(*Ankara 9668; photo courtesy The British Museum*).

Figure 11. Carchemish, Hero vs. Animals, relief from the Herald's Wall.
(*Ankara 9665; photo courtesy The British Museum*).

Figure 12. Carchemish, Musicians, relief from King's Gate of Katuwas.
(*Ankara 141; photo courtesy The British Museum*).

Figure 13. Carchemish, Lion grappling Bull, relief from the Inner Court (*Ankara 9654; photo courtesy The British Museum*).

Figure 14. Carchemish, steatite pyxis lid. (*Photo courtesy The British Museum*).

Figure 15. Carchemish, Head of Goddess (Kubaba?), relief from the Long Wall of Suhis II. (*Ankara 103; photo the author*).

Figure 16. Nimrud, long ivory pyxis of North Syrian style. (*BM 118175; photo courtesy The British Museum*).

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

HOMER'S PHOENICIANS:
HISTORY, ETHNOGRAPHY, OR LITERARY TROPE?
[A PERSPECTIVE ON EARLY ORIENTALISM]

In what I like to call the serendipity of scholarship, it sometimes happens that responding to a framework set for a conference or volume brings one to the unexpected: a new perspective on one's own material occasioned by an unusual lens, or, more rarely, by an unanticipated view of the lens itself.

It had been my intention to proceed from the evocative accounts of Phoenician merchant-seamen in the *Odyssey* to the *realia* of evidence for Phoenician trade—an interest that stems from work done on ivories from Spain and the westward expansion of the Phoenicians in the eighth–seventh centuries B.C.[1]—and, by so doing, to pay tribute to the inspiring work of Emily Vermeule, who has done so much to bring the world(s) of "Homer"—that putative individual to whom we attribute the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*—alive. As research for the present article proceeded, however, I became more and more interested in the texts themselves: specifically, in how to account for anomalies between the historical evidence and the way Phoenicians are represented.

Seductive though it may be to move from eloquence in a given text to mental image to historical reconstruction, recent work in literary and cultural studies has shown that one can no longer read the Homeric poems, or indeed any literary work, with an innocent assumption of transparency between "the world" and "the word"; archaeological data

[1] I. J. Winter, "The Carmona Ivories and the Phoenicians in Spain," (M.A. thesis, Univ. of Chicago, 1966)—presented as a talk at the annual meetings of the AIA, December 1970, an abstract of which was published in *AJA* 75 (1971) 217.

and other textual studies are necessary as corroboration or corrective. With respect to the Phoenicians, at issue is whether and to what degree one can distinguish historical and ethnographic description from literary construct—"fact" from fiction—in the epics. I hope my classical colleagues will permit me this foray into their territory, and see in it a response to Professor Vermeule's passionate commitment throughout her career to the enduring life in those texts.

Phoenicians in Homer

The generic Phoenicians (*Phoinikes*) and the specific Sidonians (*Sidones*) are synonymous in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, with the city standing for the people as a whole.[2] References in the *Iliad* are but two, both associated with luxury production. In the first case, embroidered garments described as the handiwork of Sidonian women (*Iliad* 6.288ff.) are said to have been brought from Sidon by Paris himself on the same sea voyage in which he brought Helen to Troy. They were kept in the treasure chamber of Priam's palace, and were clearly highly valued, the most beautiful of them selected by Hekabe, queen of Troy, as an offering to Athena. The second passage recounts the large, "richly wrought" silver bowl (*krater*) of surpassing beauty that was set by Achilles as a prize in the funeral games of Patroklos (*Iliad* 23.740ff.). We are told that it was made cunningly by Sidonians well-skilled in deft handiwork (*Sidones poludaidaloi*) and brought over the sea by Phoenicians as a gift—presumably a royal gift—to Thoas, whose grandson gave it to Patroklos as ransom for a son of Priam. In other words, the bowl is not only described as being of superb craftsmanship; it has also had a complex history of elite ownership.

Inclusion of the *krater*'s previous owners both attests to and establishes the bowl's quality and value; it also provides us with an example of the circuit of royal gifting well known in the Levant in both the Late Bronze

---

[2] See on this the general discussions in J. D. Muhly, "Homer and the Phoenicians: The Relations between Greece and the Near East in the Late Bronze and Early Iron Age," *Berytus* 19 (1970) 19–64, and P. Wathelet, "Les phéniciens et la tradition homerique," in E. Gubel et al., eds., *Studia Phoenicia* I/II: *Sauvons Tyr/Histoire phénicienne* (Leuven 1983) 235–243.

and Early Iron Ages.[3] The reference to Hekabe's garments, by contrast, attests to the acquisition of luxury goods through purchase in foreign ports during the course of sea voyages. Taken together, the two set up an interesting opposition: apart from setting the stage for the luxurious appointments of the Trojan court, mention of the Sidonian garments suggests a relationship between women and luxury, women and commodity, even, as both Helen and the garments are carried in the same ship; while the Sidonian silver vessel with its royal associations is owned and transmitted in a male universe of fellowship and gifting.

The same elite male universe is reproduced in the first reference to Phoenician work in the *Odyssey*, when Menelaos of Sparta gives Telemachos a silver mixing bowl that had been a gift from the king of Sidon (*Odyssey* 4.614–619). By referring to the king of Sidon as a warrior (*hērōs*) and by acknowledging his gift within the frame of appropriate Greek standards of hospitality, the two rulers are established as equals, Menelaos having been received in Sidon as Telemachos was now received in Sparta. Both the vessel given Telemachos and the prize set by Achilles in the *Iliad* are kraters, both are well wrought; this one, with gilded rim, is called the best and costliest (*kalliston kai timēestaton*). As yet another royal gift passed on in high social circles, it does not significantly add to our picture, except that the gilding suggests even greater luxury than the bowl given to Patroklos.

The other references in the *Odyssey* deal with Phoenician sailing practice, not products, and reflect a significant shift in tone. In Odysseus' meeting with a disguised Athena upon his return to Ithaca, for example (*Odyssey* 13.256–286), a Phoenician ship moored off the coast of Crete is described as the means by which the hero escapes the island, buying his passage with a portion of the booty from Troy. Odysseus claims to have been put ashore on Ithaca with the rest of his goods after the ship had been blown off course in a storm. This tale was invented by Odysseus to explain his hoard of booty without having to divulge his true identity to a presumed stranger. In fact, he had been quite purposively carried to Ithaca by Phaeacian sailors after having been nobly received and laden

---

[3] C. Zaccagnini, *Lo scambio dei doni nel Vicino Oriente* … (Rome 1973). See also, T. O. Beidelman, "Agonistic Exchange: Homeric Reciprocity and the Heritage of Simmel and Mauss," *Cultural Anthropology* 4 (1989) 227–259, esp. 231, 244, 250, for the importance of exchange in Greek tradition specifically. Beidelman's point is that exchange is a central mechanism by which social relationships, and thereby the social self, are established, so that with *whom* gifts are exchanged is important.

with gifts by their rulers (*Odyssey* 8.387ff.). Significant here is that, as noted by Carpenter,[4] the pointed references to seagoing Phoenicians who kept to their bargain and did not rob him of his personal goods effectively underscore expectations to the contrary.

The second negative reference also comes in an invented tale, as Odysseus presents himself in disguise to Eumaeus upon returning to Ithaca (*Odyssey* 14.287–315). In yet another fabricated scenario, Odysseus describes himself as a highborn Cretan who, on his return voyage from the Trojan War, landed in Egypt, where he stayed for seven years. Then, in the eighth year, a Phoenician ship arrived, its captain described as one 'well versed in guile' (*apatēlia eidōs*), a greedy knave (*trōktēs*; literally, 'gobbler') who had already 'wrought much evil among men' (14.288–289), who tricks Odysseus with cunning persuasion (*parpepithōn hēisi phresin*, 14.290), and who gives false counsel (*pseudea bouleusas*, 14.296). This description introduces epithets and attributes that will be repeated in the more familiar story of the abduction of the faithful swineherd Eumaeus that follows. Here, the fictive Phoenician captain prevailed upon the veteran to accompany him home to Phoenicia, where he had a house and possessions. After a year, the two were to set out again, ostensibly in a joint venture with a cargo for Libya, but in fact the Phoenician's intention was to sell the "Cretan" as well. Punishment comes when the ship is destroyed en route by a Zeus-inspired storm, from which only the speaker-hero is said to have been saved.

This passage tends to be omitted by scholars seeking information about or perspective on the Phoenicians, but in fact it introduces some important elements. The story contains what seems to be a most realistic pattern of foreign movement related to the shipping ventures of the Phoenician shipmaster: he is first encountered on an expedition to Egypt; he returns home to a situation of means, spends a long period between voyages, provisions his ship, and then sets out again on a lengthy voyage, this time to Libya. At the same time, we are presented with an array of negative character traits attributed to the Phoenician. These traits go beyond mere description to serve a moralizing subtext, the underlying message of which is that hunger for commercial profit leads to the breaking of higher laws of social honor, punishable by divine retribution.

---

[4] R. Carpenter, "Phoenicians in the West," *AJA* 62 (1958) 35–54, esp. 35.

Many of these elements are repeated in the better-known story of Eumaeus' abduction as a child from his native island (*Odyssey* 15.403–484), which follows almost immediately upon Odysseus' account of himself as a Cretan. Indeed, the two should really be seen as a paired exchange of personal histories, the common thread of which is the deceitfulness of Phoenicians. Initially, the description of the Phoenician nursemaid of the young Eumaeus is a sympathetic one: her homeland, Sidon, is described as rich in bronze (*polukhalkou, Odyssey* 15.425), another echo of the *Iliad*'s reference to fine metalwork; she is skilled, as women should be, "in glorious handiwork" (i.e., embroidery); and she has suffered, having been abducted by Taphian pirates and sold into service. As we progress through the narrative, however, she is described more negatively, as is the crew of the Phoenician ship that subsequently lands at the island. The Phoenician sailors are 'famed for their ships' (*nausiklutoi, Odyssey* 15.415); but, like the Phoenician captain of Odysseus' tale, they are also 'greedy' (*trōktai, Odyssey* 15.416), their ships filled with goods for which the term used, *athurmata* (*Odyssey* 15.416), suggests trinkets, baubles, items of minor value. In their planned seduction of Eumaeus' nursemaid, they are described as *polupaipaloi*—often translated as 'wily,' but a very different term from that applied to the clever, 'wily' Odysseus (*polumētis*, cf. below). The Phoenicians are more "tricky" or "crafty" than cunning; and as Carpenter pointed out, the *polupaipaloi* of the *Odyssey* is likely a conscious wordplay on the *poludaidaloi* of the *Iliad*.

As the Sidonian woman and the sailors plan her escape from the island, a picture so detailed and realistic is drawn of their activities that it is tempting for the modern historian to read it as standard Phoenician trading practice. The sailors proceed in the bartering of their wares and the filling up of their black ship with new goods, a process that takes a full year. When finally loaded and ready to sail, a farewell visit is made to the palace to offer one last item of value. The particular amber and gold necklace brought for scrutiny to the noble women (which in the narrative serves as the departure signal to the faithless nurse) seems to represent those very *athurmata*, or trinkets, described earlier as cargo and found on occasion as orientalizing objects in archaeological contexts. In sum, then, what is represented is a consistent picture of able but greedy and duplicitous seamen, carrying goods of minor consequence to be exchanged through barter for replacement goods, and who are not above trafficking in humans as well (i.e., the abduction of the child Eumaeus—*Odyssey* 15.452–453), in their trading circuit of over a year's duration.

History and Ethnography

In the absence of contemporary Phoenician historical texts, hungry
scholars of the Near East have mined Homer's pictures for generations,
emphasizing their historical value when compared with archaeological
evidence. Over the past twenty years, however, renewed scholarly interest
in the Phoenicians has yielded considerable information and perspective.
A great deal of progress has been made toward understanding the
nature and role of the Phoenicians in their homeland.[5] The relation-
ship between the designation "Phoenician" as used in Greek sources
and the population of the Levantine coast to whom it refers has been
discussed, including continuities with the second millennium Canaan-
ites and Syrians of the same geographical region.[6] The coastal strip
of the Eastern Mediterranean inhabited by "Phoenicians" in the first
millennium B.C. can be generally defined, and is known to have been
organized not as a unified polity but as a series of only sometimes
confederated city-states.[7] At the same time, since the Phoenicians as a
whole are often glossed in terms of the two dominant cities, Tyre and
Sidon (e.g., men of Tyre, Sidonian bowl), studies like Katzenstein's
History of Tyre are in essence reviews of all Phoenician sources.[8] At the

---

[5] See especially W. Röllig, "Die Phönizier des Mutterlandes zur Zeit der Kolo-
nisierung," in H.-G. Niemeyer, ed., *Phönizier im Westen*, (MM Beih. 8) (Mainz 1982)
15–30. See also the various essays in the catalogue of the major exhibition on the
Phoenicians that took place at the Palazzo Grassi, Venice: S. Moscati, ed., *The Phoeni-
cians* (New York 1988).

[6] See on this Muhly (supra n. 2); C. Baurain, "Portées chronologiques et géogra-
phiques du terme 'Phénicien'," in C. Bonnet et al., eds., *Studia Phoenicia* IV: *Religio-
Phoenicia* (Namur 1986) 7–28; and now M. Kochavi, "Some Connections between the
Aegean and the Levant in the Second Millennium B.C.: A View from the East," in
G. Kopcke and I. Tokumaru, eds., *Greece between East and West: 10th–8th Centuries B.C.*,
(Mainz 1992) 7–15. For relatively recently excavated material that bridges the second
and first millennia, see the catalogue of an exhibition in Saarbrücken: R. Hachmann,
ed., *Frühe Phöniker im Libanon: 20 Jahre deutsche Ausgrabungen in Kāmid el-Lōz* (Mainz am
Rhein 1983).

[7] The collective term "Kings of the Seacoast" is used extensively in Neo-Assyrian
texts, see for example A. K. Grayson, *Assyrian Royal Inscriptions* II (Toronto 1976) para.
586. The sources are reviewed in G. Kestemont, "Tyr et les Assyriens," in E. Gubel
et al., eds. (supra n. 2) 53–78. Attempts have been made to define the southern and
northern limits of this area. Essential for our purposes is that the area seems to extend
only as far as Arwad in the north, and distinctly not as far as the mouth of the Orontes,
thus leaving the port of Al-Mina out of Phoenician territory (contra A. J. Graham,
"The Historical Interpretation of Al-Mina," *DHA* 12 [1986] 51–65).

[8] H. J. Katzenstein, *The History of Tyre from the Beginning of the 2nd Millennium B.C.E.
until the Fall of the Neo-Babylonian Empire in 538 B.C.E.* (Jerusalem 1973).

same time, series of recent excavations have added significantly to our understanding, by providing better ceramic typologies of local materials and better synchronisms with Greek and Cypriote wares.[9] Greater precision in defining and describing Phoenician art has further helped in the evaluation of materials found throughout the Mediterranean,[10] while specific topics, such as Phoenician religion, have been the subject of scholarly meetings, resulting in valuable studies of various aspects of social and cultic life.[11] And finally, considerable attention has been paid to the role of the Phoenicians in seafaring and colonization of the Mediterranean in the same period.[12] Consequently, we are in a much better position to assess the accuracy of the "fit" between data and the picture drawn of Phoenicians in both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.

---

[9] See in particular P. Bikai, *The Pottery of Tyre* (Warminster 1978); J.-P. Thalmann, "Tell ʿArqa (Liban Nord): Campagnes I–III (1972–1974)," *Syria* 55 (1978) 1–152; R. Saidah, "Archaeology in the Lebanon, 1968–9," *Berytus* 18 (1969) 122, for a small site near Sidon; J. LaGarce, "Rapports de Ras Ibn Hani avec la Phénicie et la Mediterranée orientale à L'Age du Fer," in P. Bartolini and S. F. Bondi, eds., *Atti del I. Congresso Internazionale di studi fenici e punici* (Rome 1983) 223–226; and M. W. Prausnitz, "Die Nekropolen von Akhziv und die Entwicklung der Keramik von 10. bis zur 7. Jahr. v. Chr. in Akhziv, Samarra und Ashdod," in Niemeyer, ed. (supra n. 5) 31–44.

We now know that the Greek Geometric pottery chronology is in need of revision, and that synchronisms are fraught with difficulty (see E. D. Francis and M. Vickers, "Greek Geometric Pottery at Hama and its Implications for Near Eastern Chronology," *Levant* 17 [1984] 131–138, for example). Nevertheless, the mixed contexts at least give us established points of co-occurrence. Two dissertations are presently under way on materials from Near Eastern sites of the Early Iron Age that should help to clarify matters: one by Karen Bradley at the University of Chicago on pottery found at the Amuq sites in northern Syria; the other by Amelie Beyhum at Harvard University on pottery from the site of Tell es-Saidiyeh in Lebanon. In both cases, red-slip wares traditionally thought of as "Phoenician," but which may well be simply generic Levantine, are found mixed with both Cypriot and Greek imports. The stratigraphic control of these materials should serve to increase our knowledge of the development of red-slip ware itself and also of the synchronisms with other pottery types.

[10] Cf. I. J. Winter, "Phoenician and North Syrian Ivory Carving in Historical Context: Questions of style and distribution," *Iraq* 38 (1976) 1–22; E. Gubel, "Art in Tyre during the First and Second Iron Age: A preliminary survey," in Gubel et al., eds. (supra n. 2) 25–45; S. Brown, "Perspectives on Phoenician Art," *BA* 55 (1992) 6–24.

[11] Cf. E. Gubel and E. Lipiński, eds., *Studia Phoenicia* III: *Phoenicia and its Neighbors* (Leuven 1985); and Bonnet et al., eds. (supra n. 6).

[12] See colloquia, studies, and volumes of F. Barecca et al., *L'espansione fenicia nel Mediterraneo*, Studi Semitici 38 (Rome 1971); G. Bunnens, *L'expansion phénicienne en Mediterranée* (Bruxelles-Rome 1979); S. Frankenstein, "The Impact of Phoenician and Greek Expansion on the Early Iron Age Societies of Southern Iberia and Southwestern Germany" (Ph.D. diss., London 1977); E. Lipiński, ed., *Studia Phoenicia* V: *Phoenicia and the East Mediterranean in the First Millennium B.C.* (Leuven 1987); Niemeyer, ed. (supra n. 5); and H. G. Niemeyer, "Die Phönizier und die Mittelmeerwelt im Zeitalter Homers," *JRGZM* 31 (1984) 1–94.

Homer's references to well-wrought silver kraters of high quality and great value parallel closely the language used by the biblical chronicler in describing the cunning and skill "to grave all manner of graving" of the Phoenician craftsman sent to build Solomon's palace and temple (II Chron. 2:14). Similar vessels recorded as tribute from Phoenician rulers by the Assyrian king Assurnasirpal II in the ninth century B.C. further attest to quality production, as well as to the practice of elite gifting of metalwork.[13] The texts are corroborated by archaeological finds of vessels attributed to Phoenician workshops in the Assyrian capital of Nimrud; that some were also reaching Cyprus and Etruria in the West has been known for many years.[14] Most important of the recent finds is a bronze bowl found at the site of Lefkandi in Euboea along with Late Protogeometric/Early Geometric pottery of c. 900 B.C.[15] This represents the earliest context known to date for decorated Phoenician materials in mainland Greece; and, as we shall see below, with the special role claimed for Euboea in both early Greek mercantile ventures and the fixation of the text of the *Odyssey*, the importance of this vessel at Lefkandi takes on major historical proportions.

No fragments of textiles have been recovered analogous to the embroidered garments mentioned as having been brought to Troy from Sidon; however, tribute from various Phoenician kings to Assyrian rulers regularly included multicolored garments of sufficient value to be mentioned along with bulk silver and gold and the metal vessels.[16] In addition, the later (probably sixth century) account of the trade of Tyre in the Hebrew Bible lists multicolored textiles and garments as Tyre's own merchandise traded abroad (Exekiel 27:23). These sources support the view that the region was likely to have been among those producing and distributing luxury garments in the Early Iron Age, and that rulers of equal status to the queen of Troy would have been acquiring such garments.[17]

---

[13] Grayson (supra n. 7).

[14] See catalogue and bibliography in G. Markoe, *Phoenician Bronze and Silver Bowls from Cyprus and the Mediterranean* (Berkeley 1985).

[15] Found in Tomb 55; see M. R. Popham et al., "Further Excavation of the Toumba Cemetery at Lefkandi, 1984 and 1986," *AR* 35, 1988–1989, 117–129.

[16] For example Grayson (supra n. 7); see also Röllig (supra n. 5) 28.

[17] Sarah Morris also reminds me that textile fragments and the remains of a garment have been found in Lefkandi (M. R. Popham et al., "The hero of Lefkandi," *Antiquity* 56 [1983] 169–174), though of course there is no evidence that any were of Phoenician manufacture.

Homeric references to Phoenician seafaring certainly are corroborated by other textual references. Among these are the more or less contemporary treaty of Esarhaddon of Assyria with Tyre (dated 676 B.C.) and the biblical citations that bracket the period in question.[18] That seafaring in the Eastern Mediterranean was a well-developed tradition going back at least into the Late Bronze Age has been supported by two excavated shipwrecks—Cape Gelidonya and Ulu Burun.[19] In both cases, extremely varied cargoes, including bulk metals, ceramic containers, and small luxury items from a variety of home ports, were gathered on vessels that foundered off the southern coast of Turkey. The Solomonic reference to naval expeditions lasting three years further supports both Odysseus' and Eumaeus' accounts of lengthy voyages and sojourns away from home.

Unfortunately, when Phoenician objects are found in Greek or other contexts, it is virtually impossible to establish whether or not the goods were carried by Phoenician sailors, except in those cases where additional evidence may be adduced to suggest the ethnic makeup of segments of the local population and/or the patterns of access thereto.[20] As we continue to accumulate archaeological evidence and find new correlations between textual references to Phoenicians as seafarers and

---

[18] For Esarhaddon, see S. Parpola and K. Watanabe, *Neo-Assyrian Treaties and Loyalty Oaths* (Helsinki 1988) Treaty III. The biblical accounts include the joint sea ventures of Solomon of Israel and Hiram of Tyre in the tenth century B.C. (I. Kings 9:26–28 and 10:11, 22; II. Chron. 9:21) and the long description of the port and trade of Tyre in the sixth century (Ezekiel 27). Recent discussions include G. Bunnens, "Tyr et la mer," in Gubel et al., eds. (supra n. 2); M. Elat, "Phoenician Overland Trade within the Mesopotamian Empires," in M. Cogan and I. Ephal, eds., *Ah, Assyria…Studies in Assyrian History…presented to H. Tadmor* (Jerusalem 1991) 21–35; M. Liverani, "The Trade Network of Tyre according to Ezek. 27," in Cogan and Ephal, eds. (supra this note) 65–79; and I. M. Diakonoff, "The Naval Power and Trade of Tyre," *IEJ* 42/3–4 (1992) 168–193.

[19] Cf. G. F. Bass, *Cape Gelidonya: A Bronze Age Shipwreck* (Philadephia, 1967), and "A Bronze-Age Shipwreck at Ulu Burun (Kaş): 1984 campaign," *AJA* 90 (1986) 269–296.

[20] For example, at Pithekoussai or at Lefkandi: G. Buchner, "Die Beziehungen zwischen der euboischen Kolonie Pithekoussai auf der Insel Ischia und dem nordwest-semitischen Mittelmeerraum in der zweiten Halfte des 8. Jhs. v. Chr," in Niemeyer, ed. (supra n. 5) 277–297; Popham et al. (supra n. 15). See also on this issue J. N. Coldstream, "Greeks and Phoenicians in the Aegean," in Niemeyer, ed. (supra n. 5) 261–272, and Diakonoff (supra n. 18) 193 re goods imported to Tyre for *re*-export elsewhere, which suggests that, at least in the sixth century, Phoenicians were carrying materials not necessarily Phoenician in manufacture.

material culture distributed across the Mediterranean,[21] it is hoped that we will be able to expand the picture of maritime activity in this period. It has certainly become clear that the process of Phoenician expansion into the Mediterranean is more complex than had been thought merely on the basis of later classical sources. Carpenter was among the first to argue for the down-dating of the establishment of Phoenician colonies in the West, based upon then-known archaeological data. While he was not wrong to question the traditional dates of eleventh century for Utica and Cádiz, ninth century for Carthage, it would seem that his revised estimates were too low, and the pendulum is swinging back up again. Two primary issues have emerged: first, that we should distinguish Phoenician activity in the Eastern Mediterranean from activity in the West, as it would seem the former preceded the latter by several centuries; and second, that Phoenician expansion into the West must be understood as occurring in several phases.

As far as the first issue is concerned, with recent excavations on Cyprus, particularly at Kition, historians have come to agree with the original formulation of Emil Forrer that Classical sources may have inadvertently erred in attributing early foundation dates to Carthage (*karthadasht*, literally, 'new city' in Phoenician) by confusing it with an installation of the same name on Cyprus.[22] Indeed, an entire colloquium devoted to aspects of Phoenician activity in the Eastern Mediterranean has underscored this issue.[23] With evidence now for not only an inscribed Phoenician bowl on Crete, but an actual installation and shrine near Kommos on the southeastern coast dated to the tenth century, we can certainly speak of a presence very early in the first millennium B.C.[24] Shaw has wondered whether the coastal installation might not have served as a staging platform for trips into the interior;[25] however, in a world of coastal sailing, where port anchorage is frequent, it is equally

---

[21] For example, at Thasos, cf. A. J. Graham, "The Foundation of Thasos," *BSA* 63 (1978) 86–97.

[22] See E. Forrer, "Karthago wurde erst 673/663 vor Christ gegründet," in H. Kusch, ed., *Festschrift Franz Dornseiff* (Leipzig 1953) 85–93, and subsequently E. Lipiński, "La Carthage de Chypre," in Gubel et al., eds. (supra n. 2) 209–234, and D. Neiman, "Carchedon = 'New City'," *JNES* 25 (1966) 42–47.

[23] Lipiński, ed. (supra n. 12).

[24] M. Sznycer, "L'inscription phénicienne de Tekke près de Cnossos," *Kadmos* 18 (1979) 89–93; J. W. Shaw, "Phoenicians in Southern Crete," *AJA* 93 (1989) 165–184; O. Negbi, "Evidence for Early Phoenician Communities on the Eastern Mediterranean Islands," *Levant* 14 (1982) 179–182.

[25] Shaw (supra n. 24) 182.

important to see such installations as possible links in a chain of land-falls. What is particularly satisfying about the new Cretan finds is how well they fit with the Homeric image in the story invented by Odysseus (*Odyssey* 13.256ff., cited above) of a Phoenician ship sitting off the coast of Crete that agreed to take him to Pylos, but got blown off course to Ithaca; or the later reference (*Odyssey* 14.300) to a course between the Phoenician coast and Libya passing to the windward (i.e., along the north shore) of Crete, where the ship foundered in a storm.

Such stories illustrate the hazards of Mediterranean sailing, although we still have a lot to learn about the limits and possibilities of oar-driven sailing ships. While Crete could well have been a staging point en route to North Africa or other Western locations, no systematic study of trade winds, sailing patterns, or intervals between landfalls has yet been undertaken of the sort incorporated into popular reenactments of ancient voyages[26] that would permit archaeologists to reconstruct likely itineraries with any assurance. The relatively few inquiries into sailing conditions by archaeologists and ancient historians add elements of the picture, and attest to generally counterclockwise currents and prevailing wind patterns, hence circuits, in both the Western and the Eastern Mediterranean.[27] Nevertheless, what does seem evident is that Phoenician activity may have been contained within the Eastern Mediterranean for some time before moving westward toward Spain, Italy, and even Carthage, since archaeological evidence to date cannot support a presence in the West before the early eighth century B.C.[28]—an historical situation which becomes relevant when discussing the degree to which second or first millennium conditions govern context in the Homeric epics.

On the second issue, Niemeyer has distinguished three developmental phases of Phoenician expansion to the West: an early, "seafaring" phase, in which sources of metal and markets were identified and began

[26] For example, T. Severin, *The Ulysses Voyage: Sea Search for the Odyssey* (London 1987).

[27] For the western Mediterranean, see C. Picard, "Les navigateurs de Carthage vers l'ouest, Carthage et le pays de Tarsis aux VIIIᵉ–VIᵉ siècles," in Niemeyer, ed. (supra n. 5) 167–173, especially Map, p. 170. Aspects of the eastern Mediterranean circuit are discussed in D. Conwell, "On Ostrich Eggs and Libyans: Traces of a Bronze Age People from Bates' Island, Egypt," *Expedition* 29 (1987) 25–37; Bass 1986 (supra n. 19), and M. Korfmann, "Troy: Topography and Navigation," in M. J. Mellink, ed., *Troy and the Trojan War*, (Bryn Mawr 1986) 1–16.

[28] Cf. H. G. Niemeyer, "Los comienzos de Cartago y la expansión fenicia en el area mediterranea," *Gerion* 7 (1989) 11–40.

to be exploited; a middle, "settlement" phase, in which permanent
Phoenician installations were established in proximity to sources and
markets; and a third, "impact" phase, in which Phoenician/Oriental
"influence" was absorbed and became evident in the material produce
and cultural patterns of local populations in contact with Phoenician
goods and settlers.[29] These distinctions are useful for an understanding
of the dynamics of Phoenician penetration of the West, and a number
of recent studies have presented archaeological data in support of one
or another of the phases.[30]

Although all of the references to Phoenicians in the *Iliad* or the *Odyssey*
seem to be confined to the first phase of simple, itinerant "seafaring,"
this in itself constitutes neither historical evidence *per se* nor evidence for
the date of the texts. For, despite the apparent "fit" between Homeric
references to the Phoenicians and extratextual data—largely in the
realm of individual details—there are a number of missing dimensions
that speak to the lack of historical transparency between phenomenon
and textual representation. The larger picture resulting from additional
textual and archaeological data is not touched upon in either the *Iliad*
or the *Odyssey*, and must be accounted for before we can hope to
understand Homer's Phoenicians.

References to Sidon as a developed port city into which Paris sailed en
route to Troy (*Iliad* 6.290–291)—where Menelaos was given hospitality
en route home after the war (*Odyssey* 15.118–119), and whose king was
an equal, integrated into the elite gifting network of his times (ibid.)—
imply a highly developed urban polity with complex sociopolitical

---

[29] Niemeyer (supra n. 12).
[30] With regard to Spain alone, see M. E. Aubet, "Los fenicios en España: estado
de la cuestión y perspectivas," *Aula Orientalis* 3 (1985) 9–38; M. E. Aubet-Semmler,
"Aspectos de la colonización fenicia en Andalucía durante el siglo VIII a.c.," in Bar-
tolini and Bondi, eds. (supra n. 9) 815–824; and J. M. Blazquez, "Panorama general
de la presencia fenicia y punica en España," in Bartolini and Bondi, eds. (supra n. 9);
for overviews, see J. Ferron, "À propos de la civilisation phénicienne d'occident," *Lato-
mus* 29 (1970) 1026–1037; J. P. Garrido-Roiz, "Presencia fenicia en el area átlantica
andaluza: La necropólis orientalizante de Huelva (la Joya)," in Bartolini and Bondi,
eds. (supra n. 9) 857–864; M. Koch, *Tarschisch und Hispanien. Historische, geographische und
namenkundliche Untersuchungen zur Phönizische Kolonisation der Iberischen Halbinsel*, Madrider
Forschungen 14 (Berlin 1984); G. Maass-Kindemann, "Vasos fenicios de los siglos
VIII–VI en España: Su procedencia y su posición dentro del mundo fenicio occiden-
tal," *Aula Orientalis* 3 (1985) 227–239; F. Molina Fajardo, "Almuñecar a la luz de los
nuevos hallazgos fenicios," *Aula Orientalis* 3 (1985) 193–216; Niemeyer (supra n. 12);
P. Rufete Tomico, "Die phönizische Rote Ware aus Huelva," *MM* 30 (1989) 118–134; and
H. Schubart, "Phönizische Niederlassungen an der iberischen Südküste," in Niemeyer,
ed. (supra n. 5) 207–230.

organization. This is corroborated by other attributes associated with urbanization and the state, such as the keeping of annals and historical records—a practice that is well known for the contemporary Assyrians and Babylonians. It is attested for the Phoenicians as well, preserved in both Pseudo-Aristotle (*De Mirabilibus* 134) and Josephus, who wrote: "For years, the people of Tyre have kept public records…of memorable events in their internal history and relations with foreign nations" (*Contra Apionem* i.106; also *Antiquitates Iudaicae* viii.146). Yet this picture is at variance with the rogue sailor-traders of Odysseus' invented and Eumaeus' autobiographical tales, who seem to operate entirely independently, within no sociopolitical hierarchy and answerable to no official oversight. Nevertheless, it is clear from Assyrian sources that trade was supervised by and under the control of the state, since it was with the ruler that Assyrians set terms of trade in the course of Assyrian political expansion. In a letter of the reign of Tiglath-Pileser III (745–724 B.C.), for example, Phoenician trade with Philistia and Egypt is ordered curtailed, the benefits to be channeled to Assyria; and in the treaty written by Esarhaddon with the ruler of Tyre, there is a lengthy elaboration of each king's rights to shipwrecks and access to ports along the Levantine coast.[31] In addition, there was an established system of weights maintained,[32] which equally speaks to a complex state organization. And finally, the complex balance of independent and official trading operations implied in the account of Ezekiel for the sixth century suggests a well-established system of long duration.[33]

We know little of how the production of luxury materials was organized, given the limited exposure of Phoenician sites and the lack of contemporary economic texts.[34] Objects attributed to Phoenician work

---

[31] See discussion in Winter (supra n. 10) 20; the text in Parpola and Watanabe (supra n. 18).

[32] F. Bron and A. Lemaire, "Poids inscrits phénicio-araméens du VIIIᵉ siècle av. J.C.," in Bartolini and Bondi, eds. (supra n. 9) 763–770.

[33] Diakonoff (supra n. 18) 182.

[34] M. Heltzer, "A recently discovered Phoenician Inscription and the Problem of the Guild of Metal-Casters," in Bartolini and Bondi, eds. (supra n. 9) 119–123, has suggested the existence of guilds, at least of metalworkers, on the basis of an inscribed Phoenician silver bowl found in Italy on which the owner was described as *bn nsk*, lit. 'son of the caster,' but which he would read 'son—i.e., member—of the (guild of) casters.' If true, this, too, speaks to a degree of urban organization; however I am not fully persuaded, since it is unclear that individuals identified themselves by profession, rather than by patronym. The reference in II. Chron. 13–14 to the Phoenician craftsman sent by Hiram of Tyre to David in Jerusalem tells us that his father, too, was a man of Tyre, but it is not clear whether the following clause, "skillful to work

are largely known from findspots outside of the homeland and assigned on the basis of stylistic arguments.[35] The two classes of works best preserved are metalwork and ivory carving, luxury goods of which the vast majority have been found as part of the treasuries of royal palaces like Nimrud and Khorsabad in Assyria, and Samaria in Israel. Various scenarios for their manufacture may be envisioned: i.e., made expressly for a ruler of a foreign state, as part of the tradition of royal gift-giving in the ancient Near East; made for a Phoenician ruler and presented as a gift from royal stores to a foreign court; or taken as booty from royal contexts during some military campaign. Unfortunately, however, it is rarely possible to demonstrate the agency of one or another of these mechanisms.

Due to the elite nature of the findspots, compounded by the lack of attention to excavation in nonelite quarters at most sites, the sample we have consists mainly of works of the very highest quality—comparable therefore to the silver mixing bowls described in the Homeric texts. This has given rise to some unfortunate chronologies—particularly concerning ivories—based upon assumptions that pieces of lesser quality found elsewhere must represent degenerate, provincial, and/or later work. Nevertheless, if one looks at the major collections (Samaria, for example, or Nimrud), it is very often the case that fairly crude, often incised works have been found along with pieces of superb craftsmanship, although they are frequently buried in publications and not fully studied in analyses.[36] This is important, for such pieces call for the reevaluation of Phoenician objects found in so-called provincial contexts. For example, the ivory objects known from various grave sites in the Guadalquivir River region of southwest Spain fall into the class of works of generally lesser quality, and so have often been assigned relatively late dates and considered as provincial products—either manufactured in Spain itself or coming from the colonies of Cádiz or Carthage.[37] If,

---

in gold and in silver," refers directly to the son or to the father. In any case, there is no mention of membership in any work group, even if craft specialization was passed on from generation to generation.

[35] Cf. Winter (supra n. 10).

[36] For example, R. D. Barnett, *Catalogue of the Nimrud Ivories* (London 1957), fig. 79.

[37] B. Freyer-Schauenberg, *Elfenbeine aus dem sämischen Heraion* (Hamburg 1966[a]) and "Kolaios und die westphönizischen Elfenbeine," *MM* 7 (1966[b]) 89–108; M. E. Aubet, *Marfiles fenicios del Bajo Guadalquivir II: Acebuchal y Alcantarilla* (Valladolid 1980); Aubet (supra n. 30); Picard (supra n. 27); and mention in R. Harrison, *Spain at the Dawn of History* (London 1988) 57 and 64.

however, it is possible to establish close parallels in technique, style, and iconography with works attributed to the Phoenician homeland,[38] then a very different picture emerges: one which suggests differential quality products aimed at specific markets and audiences. In the Spanish case, for example, the ivories can be seen as the coin of small luxury trade for a less-elite or less-discriminating populace than the rulers of Near Eastern states, more along the lines of the *athurmata* being carried by the traders of Eumaeus' tale.[39] It also leads to a far more complex

---

[38] This is not the place to present all of the evidence for such an assessment of the Carmona ivories; however a few comparisons may help to establish the point that it is not necessary to view these pieces as either provincial or late, however the local archaeological assemblage may be dated. Several pieces are of extremely high quality in carving, and would rank with fine pieces from elsewhere (e.g., Hispanic Society of America, *Catalogue of Early Engraved Ivories* [New York 1928] Ac/C.I). Close parallels are apparent in type between a trapezoidal plaque-handle for a cosmetic palette from the site of Acebuchal with pieces from Beth Zur in Palestine and Nimrud, its incised decoration of horned animal with head turned back equally comparable to carved plaques from Fort Shalmaneser in Nimrud (Hispanic Society of America, Ac/B .V and Barnett [supra n. 36] S. 125). For incised plaques decorated with griffins from Bencarron, both technique and stylistic details are closely paralleled in a piece of uncertain function found at Nimrud (see Hispanic Society of America, B.I–IV, and Barnett [supra n. 36] fig. 79), while the variant on a common "sacred tree" motif that shows multiple volute-branches depicted on a plaque from Cruz del Negro is not necessarily a late debasement of the standard Near Eastern tree, as similar multiple volutes are shown on pieces from both Cyprus and Nimrud (Hispanic Society of America, C.XIII and XIV; V. Karageorghis, *Excavations in the Necropolis of Salamis*, III [Nicosia 1973] Pl. 241; and G. Herrmann, *Ivories from Room SW37, Fort Shalmaneser* [Ivories from Nimrud IV, 2] [London 1986] nos. 767 and 768).

[39] Directly relevant are the so-called "Lyre-Player" seals found distributed across the Central and Eastern Mediterranean, from Pithekoussai to Rhodes and Tarsus and along the Eastern Mediterranean littoral. Often found in private graves and nonelite contexts, they represent fairly crude, incised work. Initially studied by Porada, who suggested they might have originated in Rhodes, they were restudied once the Ischia finds were known, and suggested to be of Cilician origin (G. Buchner and J. Boardman, "Seals from Ischia and the Lyre-Player Group," *JdI* 81 [1966] 1–62). The group has recently been reexamined by J. Boardman, "The Lyre-Player Group of Seals: An Encore," *AA* (1990) 1–17, who now suggests that they may be Aramaean. However, this has not been generally accepted (see discussion in M. G. Amadasi Guzzo, "Fenici o Aramei in Occidente nell'VIII sec. a.c.?" in Lipiński, ed. [supra n. 12]). Their iconographic repertoire is most closely allied to Phoenician egyptianizing products. Indeed, the parallels between some of the incised ivories from the Carmona group and these seals are striking, including elements such as birds sitting on the backs of couchant lions, and details of rendering lions' tongues, paws, and manes. I find myself unpersuaded by Boardman's new hypothesis for their north Levantine origin—particularly as examples have been found at Phoenician sites, such as Byblos. The lack of numerous examples from Phoenician sites must be understood as a product of the scarcity of excavation at the major centers. New finds from Francavilla Marittima in Italy, and in Eretria, parallel the distribution of other Phoenician goods throughout the Mediterranean. This distribution pattern in combination with iconographic and stylistic parallels to

picture of the Phoenician economy: one in which production was not monolithic, but rather complex and differentially geared to the different socio-economic levels of consumers.[40]

With this more calibrated view of Phoenician goods, one begins to see the Homeric references as extremes in what was probably a graded continuum of production appropriate to targeted consumers. Thus, neither Eumaeus' *athurmata* nor Patroklos' bowl alone, nor indeed the two together as reductive exemplars, would do justice to the range of Phoenician production.

The Homeric references to Phoenician shipping also require some commentary. Clearly, some goods of high quality were moving by Phoenician carriers, as for example the bowl eventually acquired by Patroklos. When it was initially given to Thoas, we are told, "men of the Phoenicians brought it over the murky deep, and landed it in harbor…" (*Iliad* 23.744ff.). By contrast, the goods carried by the Phoenician ship in Eumaeus' tale are implied to have been of minor consequence. In no case is mention made of metals or other raw materials being carried as part of large-scale trade. Yet, even if we cannot assume the application to the eighth/seventh century of the later, sixth-century biblical

---

Phoenician works would privilege the hypothesis of a Phoenician origin for the group based upon current evidence; and if so, then we have another class of relatively crude, incised objects of homeland manufacture that could serve as comparanda for our hypothesis of mainland production of incised, lesser-quality ivories.

[40] Here, I would also differ from the conclusions reached by S. Lancel ("Ivoires phénico-puniques de la peuple archaique de Byrsa, à Carthage," in Bartolini and Bondi, eds. [supra n. 9] 687–692), who published the wonderful new ivories found in a seventh-century tomb of the Byrsa Hill at Carthage in 1978. Her argument that the ivories, including *à-jour* fragments of a sacred tree with multiple volutes and of rampant cervids grazing among the branches of a sacred tree, represent "a certain hieratisation of the motifs" and hence Carthaginian work (pp. 691–692) seems undemonstrated, given the parallels she herself draws to works from Cyprus and Nimrud. To me, by contrast, their virtual identity to Levantine work, along with the fact that these pieces were carefully stowed inside an amphora, suggests that fine-quality pieces of homeland manufacture could have been moving west along with those of lesser quality. The issue of production at Carthage must remain an open question; but until we know a lot more about the order of establishments (whether or not exploitation of the Spanish ore sources preceded the Carthage colony, for example), and the relationships maintained with the parent culture in Tyre in the early years, I do not think we can argue on any but visual criteria for provincial vs. central production. In the case of the Byrsa ivories, I do not think there is evidence to argue for stylistic features outside of the range of mainland Phoenician production (as, for example one *can* demonstrate for some "orientalizing" ivories found in Etrurian contexts).

account of the complex, multileveled trade of Tyre,[41] we can bracket the period by reference to the two Late Bronze Age shipwrecks—Cape Gelidonya and Ulu Burun—that also included metal ingots and other raw materials along with finished goods of a range of quality and value.[42] Now, the author/narrator of the *Odyssey* is not ignorant of the seagoing traffic in metals in the period, since Athena presents herself in disguise to Telemachus (*Odyssey* 1.156ff.) as an "oar-loving" Taphian merchant en route to "Temesse," carrying "shining iron" to exchange for copper (*Odyssey* 1.184).[43] It is well established from other sources that the primary basis for Phoenician maritime activity was the acquisition of metals.[44] In addition, we now have good archaeological corroboration that Phoenicians were exploiting the silver sources of the Riotinto mines in Spain by the period in which the *Odyssey* would have been written down.[45]

---

[41] Exekiel 27; on which, see the recent cautions of both Elat and Liverani (supra n. 18).

[42] See on this also the discussion in S. P. Morris, "Daidalos and Kadmos: Classicism and 'Orientalism'," in *Arethusa, Special issue* (1989) 39–54.

[43] S. P. Morris discusses this passage in *Daidalos and the Origins of Greek Art* (Princeton 1992) 119 and n. 79, where she notes that the etymology behind "Temesse"— *t'mss*—means 'forge' or 'foundry.' At the same time, it is tempting to identify Athena's Temesse with Tamassos on Cyprus, to which it would make great sense to be going for copper. The place-name "Tamesu" is included in Esarhaddon of Assyria's list of ten Cypriot kingdoms on which he imposed contributions for his new palace (D. D. Luckenbill, *Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia*, II [Chicago 1928] para. 690, just before "Kartihadasti," which must be the Cypriot Carthage, on which see supra n. 22). Therefore, by the early seventh century, a place on the island was known by a cognate name. In addition, the present site known as Tamassos has produced material (cited in J. B. Carter, *The Beginning of Greek Sculpture* [New Haven forthcoming] ch. 4) associated with Phoenician remains. Since Athena's "Taphians" represent invented peoples anyway, it is not at all impossible that they reflect a portmanteau toponym created as a conflation of two Cypriot sites, Tamassos and Paphos (suggested by Fred Winter), or that the people themselves were modeled after (Cypriot) Phoenicians—an association that goes back as far as Late Classical texts (S. P. Morris, personal communication). It is also interesting to note that in the catalogue of trade goods coming in to Tyre of the sixth century B.C., preserved in Ezekiel 27:19, the term "bright iron" is used and associated with Javan, or Greece! Could we have in the *Odyssey* story an invented synthesis of several elements related to first millennium trade in the Mediterranean: an acknowledgment of the importance of Cyprus in Mediterranean commerce, Greek wealth in iron being traded for Cypriot wealth in copper (by the fictional persona adopted by Athena, herself a Greek goddess), and a Cypro-Phoenician or Phoenician model for her "Taphians?"

[44] See discussion in Frankenstein (supra n. 12); I. J. Winter, "On the Problems of Karatepe: The reliefs and their context," *AnatStud* 29 (1979) 115–151.

[45] A. Blanco and J. M. Luzon, "Pre-Roman Silver Miners at Riotinto," *Antiquity* 43 (1969) 124–131; B. Rothenberg and A. Blanco Freijeiro, *Studies in Ancient Mining and Metallurgy in Southwest Spain: Explorations and Excavations in the Province of Huelva* (London

There are at least two ways to view the absence of any reference to the metals trade in Homeric references to the seafaring Phoenicians. First, there may have been more than one class of Phoenician trading vessel plying the Mediterranean: ships with extensive inventories including raw materials touching at major ports, while others, with more limited inventories, doing the rounds of smaller, less resource-rich ports like Syriē, the home island of Eumaeus, and Ithaca, to which he was brought. Second, however, it is possible that the Homeric picture is a reductive one. Since we are told nothing of the prospective cargoes of either Odysseus' fictive Phoenicians anchored off Crete or his fictive Phoenician trader setting off for Libya, I am inclined to the opinion that information has been provided (and/or omitted) as and when it suits narrative purposes, rather than in an attempt to be historically accurate and comprehensive, and therefore the shipload of *athurmata* should not be taken as documentary evidence for the general nature of Phoenician cargoes in the period.

The variety of type and range of value of Phoenician goods that turn up in the votive deposits of Greek sanctuaries like Samos, Ephesus, and Olympia further supports the existence of varied cargoes.[46] While it is impossible to know for certain who was carrying and depositing these objects, Günther Kopcke has suggested that it is not accidental that most of these sanctuaries were on the coast and had access from the sea, their deposits probably representing some sort of ritualized propitiation of the gods with a portion of one's cargo and/or selected objects acquired en route.[47] Further evidence that religious preoccupations were merged with early practices of navigation can be seen in the various coastal sanctuaries attributed to the Phoenicians—on the coast of Crete, in Carthage prior to the formation of the colony (as argued by Frézouls), on Kythera according to Herodotus (1.105), and on the Moroccan coast near Lixus before the founding of Cádiz according to

---

1981); and G. W. Cariveau, "Dating of 'Phoenician' slag from Iberia using Thermoluminescence Techniques," *MASCA Newsletter* 10 (1974) 1–2. See also the general reviews of this issue in Harrison (supra n. 37) ch. 4, "The Orientalizing Period," pp. 51–68; and B. Treumann-Watkins, "Phoenicians in Spain," *BA* 55 (1992) 29–35.

[46] Cf. G. Kopcke, "Heraion von Samos: Die Kampagnen 1961/1965 im Südtemenos," *AthMitt* 83 (1968) 250–314; A. Bammer, "Spuren der Phöniker im Artemision von Ephesos," *Anat.Stud.* 35 (1985) 103–108; and the exciting work of I. Kilian-Dirlmeier, "Fremde Weihungen in griechischen Heiligtümern vom 8. bis zum Beginn des 7. Jahrhundert vor Christ," *JRGZM* 32 (1985) 215–254.

[47] G. Kopcke, personal communication, 1980; also mentioned in Kochavi (supra n. 6).

Pliny (*NH* 19.63).[48] Such practice seems only too necessary when one thinks of the risks attendant upon seafaring and the agency ascribed to the gods with respect to natural phenomena in the texts we have been considering. Both risk and divine agency are vividly described by Odysseus for his fictive voyage with the Phoenician captain past Crete. They are also reflected in Phoenician invocations against destruction at sea, and in the curses at the end of the Esarhaddon treaty with Tyre, where the Assyrian king declares that if the terms of the treaty are broken, "may [the Phoenician gods]…raise an evil wind against your ships…may a strong wave sink them in the sea and a violent tide [rise up] against you."[49]

Striking by its absence is any reference in either the *Iliad* or the *Odyssey* to Niemeyer's second phase of Phoenician penetration into the Western Mediterranean: the establishment of permanent colonies. Yet the current evidence for the founding of Carthage suggests that, however the traditional date of 814 B.C. may be challenged, an installation was in place by at least the second half of the eighth century B.C.—that is, by the time the Homeric poems were beginning to be fixed as texts.[50] The duplicitous Phoenician captain's intended expedition to Libya cannot be used to imply an awareness of the Greek colony at Naukratis, and thereby a mid-seventh century *terminus post quem* for the text (consistent with the recorded foundation date), since recent excavations on Bates Island off the Egyptian/Libyan coast suggest that individuals from the more eastern Mediterranean—Cypriotes and possibly Cretans and Mycenaeans—were touching there already in the Late Bronze Age.[51] However, the locations traditionally associated with the stories of Calypso, the Land of the Lotus Eaters, Scylla and Charybdis, etc., put Odysseus in his wanderings on the coast of North Africa and in the area

---

[48] See on this, Shaw (supra n. 24); E. Frézouls, "Une nouvelle hypothèse sur la fondation de Carthage," *BCH* 79 (1955) 153–176.

[49] G. Bunnens, "Aspects religieux de l'expansion phénicienne," in Bonnet et al., eds. (supra n. 6) 119–125; Parpola and Watanabe (supra n. 18) III.10.

[50] Cf. S. Benichou-Safar, *Les Tombes puniques de Carthage. Topographie, structures, inscriptions et rites funeraires* (Paris 1982) and H.-G. Niemeyer, "Karthago, Stadt der Phönizier am Mittelmeer," *Antike Welt* 21 (1990) 80–105 for the Carthage dates; G. Nagy, "Homeric Questions," *TAPA* 122 (1992) 37–38, for the period over which the texts are likely to have been formed. This is also the period in which the first Phoenician materials are found in Spain (see references supra n. 30), so that it is impossible at present to determine whether the founding of the colony preceded or followed the beginning of commerce with the Iberian peninsula.

[51] Conwell (supra n. 27) 33.

of Sicily immediately east and north of the Carthage colony.[52] Whether
the lack of mention is a case of the Homeric author recognizing that
Carthage was a relatively new installation and so anachronistic in his
tale of Mycenaean Greeks, or whether he simply chose to ignore it as
it did not pertain to his narrative needs, we cannot say. Nevertheless,
the omission of any Phoenician, or indeed Greek, colonial activity is
striking, and can only be explained as driven by literary ends.

One final component in this picture of the purposeful reduction of
Phoenician activities is the evidence from other sources for commer-
cial and maritime competition between Phoenicians and others in the
period. Archaeological evidence, while circumstantial, is suggestive. For
both metalwork and ivory carving, distribution patterns of Phoenician
and North Syrian goods of the ninth–seventh centuries B.C.—when
not found mixed in elite contexts as the result of high-level, eclectic
acquisition, as in the Assyrian palaces—can be shown to be quite dis-
tinct, reflecting separate spheres of influence and activity.[53] A possible
conclusion to be drawn from this pattern is that Phoenician and North
Syrian city-states guarded access to resources and to markets. Such a
conclusion is further supported by evidence of a Phoenician presence
in Cilicia, which can be argued to represent an alternate route to the
metal (particularly iron) resources of eastern Anatolia, the inland routes
being controlled by North Syrian states.[54]

Of relevance here is whether or not one can posit Phoenician com-
petition with Greece in the same period. Aubet-Semmler has argued
that such competition was not operative in the eighth century.[55] In part,
her argument is based upon the presence of relatively large numbers of
Phoenician goods found in the Greek colony of Pithekoussai along with
"non-Greek" type burials (suggesting a mixed population of resident
Phoenicians and Greeks) and of Greek ceramics in Phoenician sites,
particularly in Spain.[56] She suggests that only after the Phoenician
establishment of the colony at Gades (Cádiz) in the seventh century
were there attempts to close access to the Atlantic route and maintain
a monopoly on Spanish metals.

---

[52] Cf. map in Severin (supra n. 26) 20–21.
[53] Cf. Winter (supra n. 10) maps, figs. 1 and 2, and discussion p. 21.
[54] Cf. argument in Winter (supra n. 44).
[55] In Bartolini and Bondi, eds. (supra n. 30).
[56] See also for mixed residence Coldstream (supra n. 20) and Morris (supra n. 42) 43.

Later Classical sources do refer to a climate of competition existing between Phoenicians and Greeks in the Mediterranean. In Strabo, for example, mention is made of the closeness with which Phoenician sources of metal were guarded—one captain actually running his ship aground rather than allow it to be followed to Cádiz (3.5.11). While one could argue that this state of competitive relations is typical only of later periods, I think one must first challenge Aubet's premise that the presence of goods of mixed origin necessarily reflects cooperation and precludes competition. Humphreys, for example, speaks of competitors meeting in "open" ports of trade.[57] Important to examine would be whether the very fact of seafaring under Mediterranean conditions of frequent landfalls and windward circuits predisposes ship cargoes to reflect finished goods from multiple places of origin, collected sequentially en route, as described in the account of Eumaeus and as actually reflected in the materials found on both the Cape Gelidonya and Ulu Burun wrecks, at the same time as special contracts and exclusive access to raw materials would be maintained when possible. If so, then the mixture of goods at sites like Pithekoussai would not necessarily reflect cooperative ventures. Studies of the distribution of subtypes of Late Geometric pottery have led to the proposition of intense competition between regions within Greece in Mediterranean trade and the establishment of colonies in the same period, resulting in alliances that ultimately divided and cut across regions.[58] There is every logical reason to believe therefore that access to important markets and resources would have been jealously guarded wherever possible, and that a dynamic of commercial competition would have been operative between Greeks and Phoenicians in the period as well.[59]

Yet there is no overt reference to such competition in the Homeric texts; rather, Phoenician and Greek sailors seem to operate in parallel fashion, often with similar epithets and descriptions of vessels applied to both (on which, see below). It is here that questions of the date of "Homer," and particularly of the *Odyssey* as a written text, intrude upon the discussion. It *could* be that the text was written prior to active

---

[57] S. C. Humphreys, *Anthropology and the Greeks* (London 1978) 119.

[58] J. Boardman, *The Greeks Overseas*, 3rd ed. (London 1980); W. G. Forrest, "Colonisation and the Rise of Delphi," *Historia* 6 (1957) 160–175; W. G. Runciman, "Origins of States: The case of Archaic Greece," *Journal of Comparative Study of Society and History* 24 (1982) 351–377.

[59] See on this topic G. Markoe, "In Pursuit of Metal: Phoenicians and Greeks in Italy," in Kopcke and Tokumaru, eds. (supra n. 6) 61–84.

competition between the two groups, thus reflecting accurately the current historical conditions of contemporary Mediterranean maritime life. But, since I would question Aubet's and Coldstream's constructs in any case, and find it difficult to believe that there would *not* have been some degree of competition operative in the Mediterranean sea trade, it could just as well be that the text—whether attributed to the eighth, the seventh, or even the sixth century—simply omits an important aspect of contemporary life for its own purposes.

In sum, then, the picture of Phoenician shipping in the Mediterranean reconstructable from archaeological and historical evidence is one that includes complex urban organization and production in the homeland, a high degree of state control, varied cargoes and sophisticated targeting of differing socioeconomic markets, extensive coastal installations along routes, the establishment of permanent settlements as "daughter"-colonies, and a strong likelihood of competitive interactions with neighboring communities. Yet, substantial parts of this picture were not incorporated into the various Homeric references to Phoenician goods and sailors. "Historical accuracy" is therefore partial at best, and seems to parallel closely what Baslez has found for the later fourth and third centuries: that Phoenician activity in economic and social spheres is far more varied and nuanced than is suggested by Greek sources.[60]

As for "ethnographic accuracy," if we distinguish the events and sociopolitical structures of history from cultural and personal details related to experience, then nowhere do we find evidence of direct informants serving as spokespersons for the culture (as *is* the case for Herodotus 2.113–120).[61] Observations of behavior and activities that might be appropriate to ethnography are reduced to stereotyped character traits—greed, craft, duplicitousness, etc.—and made to stand for national or cultural practice. As a result, both individual references to Phoenicians in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, as well as the overall picture of Phoenicians in the two texts, seem flattened and one-dimensional, thereby supporting the argument that the references serve a narrative rather than a documentary purpose. As Auerbach observed of the

---

[60] M. F. Baslez, "Le rôle et la place des Phéniciens dans la vie economique des ports de l'Egée," in Lipiński, ed. (supra n. 12) 267–269, 284.

[61] See discussion by E. Bickerman, "*Origines Gentium*," *CP* 47 (1952) 72.

Odyssey years ago, what is foregrounded is what we need to know to meet the requirements of the text.[62]

   If we conclude that the Phoenicians of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* do not represent three-dimensional historic or ethnographic entities, the question arises of how to account for the picture(s) drawn. In the following portion of this paper, I would like to consider two aspects of that question: first, a double-pronged inquiry into the role the Phoenicians can be seen to play within the texts, along with an analysis of the narrative goals of those portions of the text in which Phoenicians appear, that would account for the way they were represented; and second, a consideration of the role the Homeric texts themselves may be said to have played within the larger context of eighth/seventh-century Greece, the presumed time of their writing.

Literary Trope

Once it is established that our picture of the Phoenicians as historical and cultural entities does not map perfectly over their representation in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, one may begin to examine the degree to which those traits that are represented are consistent and functional in terms of textual strategy. At the same time, it is important to note that the Phoenicians *were* in fact an historically attested, "real" people, as opposed to the invented Taphians and Phaeacians who also appear in various episodes, and therefore it is important also to keep in mind that the partial verisimilitude of the Phoenicians' associated traits and practices may be relevant in understanding their role in the narrative.

   The combination of reduced roles and repetitive portrayals lends itself well to the distinction made in the analysis of literary texts between a "trope" and general terms of description. The trope is generally reliant upon traditional associations, and is manifest in repeated and formulaic usage for purposes of definition or characterization;[63] the

---

[62] E. Auerbach, *Mimesis: The representation of reality in Western literature*, trans. W. R. Trask (Princeton 1953) 23.

[63] This is not the place to enter into discussions of the difference between written and oral "texts"; however, it is useful to note how close Nagy's working definition for "formula" in oral composition is to the definition for "trope" presented here (see *Greek Mythology and Poetics* [Ithaca 1990] 29 and also Nagy [supra n. 50] 17–60: "the formula is a fixed phrase conditioned by the traditional themes of oral poetry"). What may be necessary to consider in future is how the phenomenon of the trope may merge with

particular attribute or element may well be apt, but it also has been selected to stand for a larger bundle of meaning. Tropes easily become equated with stock phrases, therefore, and are often applied as repeated adjectival modifiers of substantives. At the same time, the substantive itself can serve as a trope for some quality or collection of qualities with respect to the overall narrative. It is my point here that both the epithets applied to Phoenicians and the Phoenicians themselves can best be understood as tropes in the Homeric poems.

Perhaps the best etymology for the term is reflected in one of the epithets applied to Odysseus, *polutropos* (*Odyssey* 10.331), literally, 'he of much turning'—i.e., wily, 'he of many *devices*.' The epithet underscores the consciously applied nature of the literary "trope": a device deployed in the text in the service of strategic ends. A discussion of the use of *tropoi* in the *Odyssey* as a whole is undertaken by Pucci, who sees the use of the word *polutropos* in the opening line of the poem, although not explicitly associated with Odysseus at that point, as anticipating the hero who will be not only a man of many devices, but of many *turns* of language.[64] Indeed, this first line sets the stage for the very argument I would make—that troping as a device is being consciously applied by the poet, and fully acknowledged to his audience from the outset.

A number of qualities are repeatedly ascribed to Phoenicians in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*: masters of craft production, particularly in metalwork and textiles; possessed of black (dark) ships; sea-loving; avaricious; deceitful. What is striking is that virtually all of the neutral or positive descriptive terms associated with them are also found applied to others. Thus, Hephaistos (*Iliad* 19.367–383) or any (Greek) craftsman taught by him (*Odyssey* 6.232–234) is equally "skilled in metalwork." Telemachos' ship as he travels to Pylos and Sparta is also 'black/dark' (*nēa melainan; Odyssey* 2.430), as were the ships of the Phaeacians who carry Odysseus to Ithaca and Odysseus' own ship in his recounting of his adventures (*Odyssey* 8.34, 445; 10.332)—suggesting that the designation is generic, not typologically specific to Phoenician vessels (and could reflect either a class of vessel or a standard term of description related to features such as the weathered color of the timbers, or pitch caulking on the exterior).

---

the need for repetitive formulae as an artifact of performance in oral traditions—on which, see I. de Jong, "Narratology and Oral Poetry: The Case of Homer," *Poetics Today* 12 (1991) 405–424.

  [64] P. Pucci, "The Proem of the Odyssey," *Arethusa* 15 (1982) 53–54.

Parallels with the Phaeacians are especially significant in establishing the literary construction of the Phoenicians. The two groups share a number of attributes in addition to their black ships. Phaeacians, too, are 'famed for their ships' (*nausiklutoi; Odyssey* 7.39; 8.191, 369); and, as their men are skilled in seafaring, so their women, like the Sidonian nurse of Eumaeus, are skilled in fair handiwork (7.108–111).

But here the similarities cease. The Phaeacians are called heroes (7.44); their women are virtuous; they observe all of the proper customs of honoring guests with banqueting and gifts (8.61, 387ff.); their poets sing, as presumably Homer sang, of glorious deeds (8.73); some of their sailors may be crude of speech (6.273–275), but they are neither greedy (*trōktai*) nor devious (*polupaipaloi*); and they do not give false counsel. In brief, they manifest all of the social values that the Phoenicians negate by their actions.[65]

Nowhere is the contrast more clear, albeit subtly drawn, than between the Phoenicians and Odysseus himself. While Odysseus has long been identified as a sort of trickster throughout the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*,[66] his artifice and his various stratagems do not cross the line into dishonorable deceit, as do the acts of Phoenicians. Many English translations blur the distinctions by using the same words for both ("greedy," "wily," "crafty"); but in the Greek texts, even when playing upon similar characteristics, a careful separation of terms and epithets is maintained.

---

[65] A blurring of the clear boundaries between those who act in accord with the social code and those who contravene the code seems to occur in references to piracy and the traffic in humans, attributed to both the Phoenicians and the Taphians—the fictitious people with whom Athena associates herself when she appears in disguise to Telemachos at the beginning of the *Odyssey* (1.156ff.). These Taphians, like the Phaeacians and Phoenicians, are "oar-loving," able sailors and traders; but they were also responsible for the initial abduction of Eumaeus' Sidonian nurse, parallel to his own later abduction by the Sidonian conspirators and the intended abduction of Odysseus' invented persona by his Phoenician host. It is possible that such traits could be attributed to the Taphians precisely because they were invented and not identified as Greek or related to the Greeks, as were the Phaeacians. (Indeed, if the invented Taphians were modeled after Cypriot Phoenicians, as per supra n. 43, this is all the more reason for them to be engaged in abduction and the traffic in humans, and the apparent ambiguity disappears.) The further irony is that, if Eumaeus was abducted by Phoenicians, he was bought by Greeks (by Odysseus' own father, in fact); hence his presence on Ithaca. That slavery was very much a part of Greek society in the eighth/seventh centuries B.C. is clear (see I. Morris, *Burial and Ancient Society: The rise of the Greek city-state* [Cambridge and New York 1987] 174–177); but it is glossed over rapidly in the texts, and may well have been a source of some discomfort.

[66] See G. Nagy, *The Best of the Achaeans* (Baltimore 1979) 51ff.

Odysseus eats and drinks greedily, but the term used is *harpaleōs* (*Odyssey* 14.110), not *trōktēs*. When he is being cunning, he is *polumētis*, 'of many wiles' (8.412, 474; 13.382, etc.), a quality in fact shared with the goddess Athena (13.299); but he is never *polupaipalos*, 'crafty' in the sense of duplicitous. When he practices guile, as in the episode of the Trojan Horse (8.492–495) or the tricking of Polyphemus (9.408), or as he is described by Athena (13.292f.), the word applied to him is *dolos*, not the *apatēlia eidōs* of Odysseus' treacherous Phoenician (14.288). And in the end, in sharp contrast with the false counseling (*pseudea bouleusas*) of that same Phoenician, Odysseus is 'best of all men in counsel,' *aristos hapantōn boulēi* (13.297–298). So, while Odysseus may play the role of a trickster, the subtlety of the text is that while some apparent characteristics of guile and artifice are shared with Phoenicians described in the *Odyssey*, Odysseus himself never stoops to behavior that violates Greek social codes. A variation on this situation is discussed by Pucci, where the same epithet is applied to both Achilles and Odysseus, *ptoliporthos*, 'sacker of cities,' but where "the sameness of the signifier masks a difference of the signified."[67] Between Odysseus and the Phoenicians, by contrast, social value is coded by a separation in descriptive terms, in order to underscore the nuanced differences in some of what could otherwise be understood as overlapping behavioral characteristics.

The line observed by Odysseus in his trickery is very important, for I believe we cannot fully understand the role played by the Phoenicians in the Homeric epics, particularly the *Odyssey*, unless we factor into it the character and role of Odysseus himself. As Nagy has shown,[68] if the contrasting heroes of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* are Achilles, possessed of *biē* ('heroic strength or force'), and Odysseus, possessed of *mētis* ('craft, artifice'), respectively, then the task of the later poem is to validate Odysseus' qualities as equally, if not more, heroic. It is a testimony to the careful construction of the text that this theme is played out in a number of places. When Odysseus recounts his successful escape from Polyphemus, for example, he has the monster assert through direct speech that he is being slain by 'guile' (a major attribute of Odysseus') 'and not by force' (*dolōi oude biēphin, Odyssey* 9.408–409). And when Odysseus meets Achilles in Hades (*Odyssey* 11.489–491), the hero of the *Iliad* asserts that he would relinquish his glory, achieved by *biē*, to be alive.

---

[67] Pucci (supra n. 64) 48.
[68] Nagy (supra n. 66).

In the discussion of this passage by Nagy,[69] it is made clear that only Odysseus' *mētis* will permit both glory *and* a safe return home.

Olson has pursued this distinction in his discussion of Odysseus' cleverness and guile pitted against the violence of other heroes, emphasizing the consistent binary play in the Homeric text.[70] I would suggest that the Phoenicians also play a part in this structure. Rather than seeing it only in terms of a single binary opposition, it is possible to see Odysseus as centered between extremes: he is clever, and thereby victorious, with respect to the too-violent; at the same time, he is noble, and thereby heroic, with respect to the too-wily and deceitful.

While the character of Odysseus can be contrasted to that of the Phoenicians, it is possible to observe deep structural similarities between the descriptions of Phoenicians and those of the Trojans. At the simplest level, both Troy and Sidon are rich in bronze, *polukhalkos* (*Iliad* 18.289). Trojans are also consumers of Phoenician luxury goods (6.290). The breaking of acceptable social codes by Paris in abducting Helen (as reproached by Hector, *Iliad* 6.281ff., 326ff.) is comparable to the various abductions attributed to Phoenicians. And the two areas are directly linked by the fact that Paris stopped in Sidon on the same journey that brought Helen to Troy (*Iliad* 6.290–292).

In this linkage of the luxury goods of the Phoenicians with the wealth of the Trojans, Wathelet sees also a deeper level of shared identification with the riches of Asia, riches that are ultimately corrupting.[71] What is more, the pairing of Trojans and Phoenicians helps to establish the opposition of both to Odysseus and the Greeks. In this respect, it is part of a well-attested pattern in later Greek literature, with respect not only to Phoenicians, but to Egyptians, Persians, Phrygians, and others as well: one of the ways in which "otherness" is established is through distinctions of barbarian from civilized.[72]

---

[69] Nagy (supra n. 66) 35–39.

[70] S. D. Olson, "Odyssey 8: Guile, Force and the Subversive Poetics of Desire," *Arethusa* 22 (1989) 135–145.

[71] Wathelet (supra n. 2) 242–243.

[72] A second way is by ascribing "female" characteristics to a national group, distinct from the "male" ideal of the Greeks. Thus, later texts contrast the gynecocracy of Dido at Carthage to the democracy of male rule in Greece, or distinguish customs, such as the use of perfumes by the Persians rather than oils, as inherently feminine (see, for example, S. Ribichini, "Mito e storia: L'imagine dei fenici nelle fonte classiche," in Bartolini and Bondi, eds. [supra n. 9] 443–448; K. De Vries, "Attic Pottery and the Achaemenid Empire," *AJA* 81 [1977] 544–548).

In the present case, the Phoenicians stand as foils against the positive character traits of the Phaeacians, the Greeks, and especially Odysseus. The Phaeacians, although similarly sea-loving, remain honorable in all dealings, while the Phoenicians break the social code by piracy and abduction. The Phoenicians are also foils for the character traits of Odysseus, representing the "evil" side of guile as opposed to the righteous and socially constructive. And they are linked with the other major "other," the Trojans, in shared qualities like the association with luxury goods, viewed with ambivalence by the Greeks. These carefully drawn traits, seen in the light of the equally carefully constructed parallelism of the two tales in which these traits are developed (the one invented by Odysseus in *Odyssey* 14 and that of Eumaeus in *Odyssey* 15), leave little doubt that what we are faced with is a highly selective and masterfully constructed system of representation woven into the text with clear narrative aims.

As Vernant has noted for the language of myth,[73] so also the language of epic draws upon concrete images. Thus, the historical identity of the Phoenicians adds weight and substance to their imagery. But these images are put in the service of a particular historical reality: in this case, a Greek reality. As such, despite the aptness of any particular detail, the Phoenicians of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* must be seen as neither historical nor ethnographic entities, but rather as well-crafted literary tropes.

Once the *facts* of troping and the narrative strategies served by the particular tropes are established, we can move to the second aspect of the question posed above: how to account for the way in which the Phoenicians are represented—particularly in view of how interwoven the whole Eastern Mediterranean was from at least the second millennium B.C. on, and how "oriental" we know Greece to have been, how great their cultural debts, in the first millennium.[74] Clearly, any attempt to "recover and understand the process of troping in another language"[75] calls for some inquiry into the role the text(s) might have played in the larger context of their originating culture.

---

[73] J.-P. Vernant, *Myth and Society in Ancient Greece*, trans. J. Lloyd (New York 1988) 244.

[74] Cf. Morris (supra n. 42); Carter (supra n. 43).

[75] P. Michalowski, "Presence at the Creation," in T. Abusch et al., eds., *Lingering Over Words, Studies…in Honor of William L. Moran* (Atlanta 1990) 383.

A recent analysis of the *Odyssey* argues that the text served to socialize the ancient reader/listener to a series of institutions and values, including a political organization grounded in peace, prosperity, friendship with one's own people, and war with the enemy.[76] The problem as I see it, however, is the same for the classicist as for the Near Eastern archaeologist mining Homer for an understanding of the Phoenicians: to what extent are the values expressed in and by the text to be taken as transparent windows into the world of its times? It was evident fairly early on that the picture of the "towns" drawn by Homer is based upon incipient notions at least of the *polis*, and hence postdates developments of the Bronze Age.[77] In the early days of matching Homeric description with archaeological evidence, the two worlds of Homer were seen as interwoven throughout the text, and scholars tended to play elaborate games with which details were historically "accurate" for the Mycenaeans of the Late Bronze Age (the boars'-tusk helmet or the tower shield of Ajax) and which details were to be seen as relevant to his own period (i.e., the towns).[78] As Snodgrass has noted, however, it has become increasingly clear that the two phases are not as clearly divided as had been thought; there are some details that are neither Late Bronze Age nor specifically eighth century, but rather represent an "artificial amalgam of widely separated historical stages."[79] These last must be seen as the stuff of which literature is made: inventions that, while not implausible, essentially serve narrative, rather than historical, ends. Establishing which details or elements actually do have a place in history, and where, is obviously easier with respect to items of material culture, more difficult with respect to social attitudes and organization. For the early first millennium B.C. which concerns us here, we are working in the absence of contemporary historical documentation.[80] Nevertheless, significant progress has been made in the past decade, principally through methodological advances in the

---

[76] G. Dietz, "Der Weg des Odysseus," *Symbolon NF* 9 (1988) 104.

[77] A. M. Snodgrass, "Poet and Painter in 8th century Greece," *PCPS* 205 (1979) 435.

[78] M. L. West, "The Rise of the Greek Epic," *JHS* 108 (1988) 156; see also the overview of E. S. Sherratt, "'Reading the texts': Archaeology and the Homeric Question," *Antiquity* 64 (1990) 807–824, on how the reading of the texts has fluctuated over time.

[79] A. M. Snodgrass, *The Dark Age of Greece: An archaeological survey of the 11th to the 8th centuries B.C.* (Edinburgh 1971) 389; discussed also by Sherratt (supra n. 78) 808.

[80] As noted by A. M. Snodgrass, *Archaic Greece: The Age of Experiment* (London 1980) 123.

analysis of archaeological data, which will help us to come closer to a reconstruction of the period, and at the same time to avoid circularity by leaving the Homeric texts aside and basing a reconstruction upon independent evidence.

However the current debates concerning the dates of the Homeric texts and whether they represent a gradual process of taking shape or one-time dictation may ultimately be resolved,[81] it seems evident that the range of possibilities keeps us within the mid-eighth through the late seventh/early sixth centuries, corresponding archaeologically to the Middle/Late Geometric through the Orientalizing periods. Throughout this period, the most salient social and political feature is the rise and consolidation of the city-state, the *polis*, with all it entailed of social stratification, economic development, and cultural change.[82]

Stimulated by studies of state-formation and urbanization in the ancient Near East and elsewhere, a number of scholars have turned their attention to comparable processes in Greece.[83] These studies document the powerful forces of change operating in Greek society from the ninth through the seventh centuries—leading to greater bureaucratization of an increasingly centralized government, more rigid demarcation between strata in social hierarchies within towns, dominance of larger towns over smaller ones, the breaking up of old kinship bonds as the basis for power, and complex economic develop-ment.[84] This economic development includes the broadening of trade

---

[81] See on this, G. Nagy, "An Evolutionary Model for the Text Fixation of Homeric Epos," in J. M. Foley, ed., *Oral Traditional Literature: A Festschrift for Albert Bates Lord* (Columbus, Ohio 1981) 390–393 and supra n. 66, pp. 5–9; R. Janko, *Homer, Hesiod and the Hymns: A diachronic development in epic dictation* (Cambridge and New York 1982); M. L. West, "Archaïsche Heldendichtung: Singen und Schreiben," in W. Kullmann and M. Reichl, eds., *Der Übergang von der Mündlichkeit zur Literatur bei den Griechen* (Tübin-gen 1990) 33–50.

[82] See on this now S. Scully, *Homer and the Sacred City* (Ithaca 1992).

[83] For example, C. G. Starr, *The Economic and Social Growth of Early Greece, 800–500 B.C.* (1977); Humphreys (supra n. 57) 130ff.; Snodgrass (supra n. 79) 87ff.; Runciman (supra n. 58); I. Morris (supra n. 65) 171–210; and the entire symposium on Greece in the eighth century, the papers of which were published by R. Hägg, ed., *The Greek Renaissance of the 8th century B.C.: Tradition and Innovation* (Stockholm 1983).

[84] The issue of kingship vs. citizen-rule in the *polis* is too complex for treatment in the present context, and indeed Jane Carter reminds me that there is little solid evi-dence in any case. It has been suggested that different city-states in early Greece were organized according to different principles, with some, like those of Euboea, showing greater social differentiation and a longer attachment to the institution of kingship (cf. I. Morris, "Tomb Cult and the 'Greek renaissance': The past in the present in the 8th century B.C.," *Antiquity* 62 [1988] 752). Even if in some cases the *polis* was organized

networks and the establishment of colonies, for which archaeological evidence has demonstrated a considerable degree of activity.[85] Concomitant with these social, political, and economic developments is the shift in organized warfare from an emphasis on individual combat to greater dependence on the strategic deployment of the phalanx, as well as significant developments in the religious sphere, including a new emphasis on pan-Hellenic sanctuaries.[86]

The eighth century B.C. is thought to mark an important watershed in the institutionalization of all of the above, with different regions of Greece following different paths toward complexity and statehood.[87] By the end of the seventh century, not only was the process of local state-formation relatively complete, but also there emerge complicated patterns of economic competition between city-states and ensuing regional alliances.[88] It is remarkable how *little* of this process is reflected in the Homeric epics. Indeed, Runciman's analysis of the period describes the world depicted in the epics as more like transitional "semi-states" with their preservation of leadership based to a greater extent on heroic prowess, personal bonds, and eloquence;[89] one cannot even call them "proto-states," in that the inevitable seeds of change leading to state-formation are not evident. In short, the epics are not at all a mirror of their time of composition.

---

around power dispersed through the citizenry, the fact remains that the status of citizen was a restricted one, and there still was a significant degree of hierarchical stratification evident between citizens and noncitizens. It is also clear from the persistence of Alcmeonid dominance in Classical Athens that these traditional hierarchies continued to function even in the "democratized" state, an observation I owe to Fred Winter.

[85] Cf. Boardman (supra n. 58) for a general overview; O.-H. Frey, "Zur Seefahrt im Mittelmeer während der Früheisenzeit," in H. Müller-Karpe, ed., *Zur geschichtlichen Bedeutung der frühen Seefahrt* (Munich 1982) on maritime activity from the tenth–eighth centuries; B. B. Shefton, "Greeks and Greek Imports in the South of the Iberian Peninsula. The archaeological evidence," in Niemeyer, ed. (supra n. 5) 337–370, on the distribution of Greek SOS amphorae in the western Mediterranean from the late eighth century through the seventh.

[86] See on this Forrest (supra n. 58) and C. Rolley, "Les grands sanctuaires pan-helléniques," in Hägg, ed. (supra n. 83) for sanctuaries; P. Vidal-Naquet, *Le chasseur noir: Formes de pensée et formes de société dans le monde grec* (Paris 1981), Vernant (supra n. 73) 29–53, and Runciman (supra n. 58) for warfare.

[87] Runciman (supra n. 58) 373; J. Whitley, "Early States and Hero Cults: A reappraisal," *JHS* 108 (1988) 173–182.

[88] As between Aigina and Athens, see S. P. Morris, *The Black and White Style: Athens and Aegina in the Orientalizing Period* (New York and London, 1984); or between Chalcis and Eretria in Euboea, see Runciman (supra n. 58) 368.

[89] Runciman (supra n. 58) 354, 358.

Now, there are at least two ways to understand this: one, that our dates for the texts are wrong and the epics were fixed in an historical period before these social and political developments, reflecting the world *as it was*; or two, that the epics were contemporary with the new sociopolitical developments, but were consciously archaizing. I think we may dismiss the former, since all present evidence suggests that the Homeric texts did indeed come into being at the time of or subsequent to the developments enumerated above. If, then, we may assume purposive selection and conscious archaisms, I believe it is important to focus not only on questions of verisimilitude, whether for past or present, but also on what ends such representative strategies may have served in the "present" of these texts.

An illuminating parallel to the situation of Homer with respect to the rise of the Greek city-state may be found in the comparable situation of the literature of Chrétien de Troyes with respect to the reorganization of social patterns that took place in northern France in the twelfth century A.D. In a most remarkable analysis by Eugene Vance,[90] it is argued that the elevation of the medieval knight to chivalric hero in romantic poetry in fact coincided with a period in which, in practical terms, the political, social, and military independence of these knights was being neutralized by urban forces within an increasingly centralized state. In literature, as in newly established public festivals like jousts, heroic action was acclaimed; but it was also confined and controlled—the shift from political action to romantic championship resulting in the *detachment* of the knight from immediate social and political involvement.

Many of the same factors we have observed in the development of the Greek state can be seen in twelfth-century France: greater social stratification; an increase in economic activity and commerce; changes in military tactics, including greater stress on infantry and less on individual combat; and the rise of an urban aristocracy that sought to authenticate its claims of nobility by locating its origins in the high deeds of a past heroic age.[91]

On the surface, Chrétien (like Homer) seems to ignore the social developments congruent with the trends of his own times toward urbanization. However, at the level of underlying code, he is in fact

---

[90] E. Vance, "Signs of the City: Medieval Poetry as Detour," *New Literary History* 4 (1973) 557–574.

[91] Vance (supra n. 90) 562–563, 572.

reinforcing those developments by a complex rhetorical strategy: transforming the aggressions of a former warrior elite into vicarious nostalgia, and in fact disempowering the "hero" while simultaneously elevating him rhetorically.[92]

Indeed, Vance suggests that there are strong parallels between the conditions underlying twelfth century France and those of the seventh-century B.C. Greek *polis* as reflected in Hesiod. I would suggest that the parallels are already visible in Homer, and already begin to be relevant in the eighth century. The jousts of which Vance speaks find a direct parallel in the establishment of the Olympic games, traditionally put in the first quarter of the eighth century (776 B.C.). Hoplite military organization, while somewhat later, is still well attested within the period of the likely formation of the Homeric texts that continue to glorify individual combat and the individual hero; and there is a marked absence of reference to what we know to have been contemporary economic developments and activities, which require collective, state-organized enterprises as opposed to individual actions.

Seen in this light, we must wonder whether the Homeric poems, rather than representing a justification of aristocratic powers in the face of the rising *polis*,[93] do not, like the lays of Chrétien de Troyes, actually represent a displacement, or at least a replacement, of the hero and heroic deeds to a more golden (or silver!) age.

Such a perspective might well affect how we view the complex phenomenon of the establishment of "hero-cults" in Greece, which appear to have shown a significant increase in cultural investment during the period that concerns us here. These hero-cults, marked by worship at Bronze Age tomb sites or the inauguration of new shrines to Bronze Age/Homeric heroes, have been the subject of a good deal of recent discussion. The dominant view, held through the mid-1970s, was that interest in the hero-cults was the direct result of the dissemination of the Homeric poems. This has been challenged by Hadzisteliou-Price and especially by Snodgrass, who argues on artistic, archaeological, and philological grounds that the development of the cult both preceded and was independent of the epics.[94] The earlier dates seem to

---

[92] Vance (supra n. 90) 573.
[93] I. Morris (supra n. 65) 757.
[94] Compare, for example, J. N. Coldstream, *Geometric Greece* (London 1977) 15 with T. Hadzisteliou-Price, "Hero Cult and Homer," *Historia* 22 (1973) 129–142, and Snodgrass (supra n. 77). See also the discussion in Popham et al. (supra n. 17), where

have been generally accepted, although the explanation of Snodgrass that the cults served the interests of a free peasantry has been seriously challenged. Instead, evidence seems to support a picture of regional differentiation, with multiple paths to state development and diverse roles for the hero-cults in different regions of Greece.[95] For Whitley, Attic hero-cults were supported in the outlying areas by Greeks opposed to the increasingly central power of Athens, while in the Argolid the same cults were an extension of central ideology; he nevertheless argues that support for the cult activities was politically motivated in both cases.[96] If we factor Vance's construct into the equation, however, and see such heroization as a conscious or unconscious strategy of displacement, then even the Attic phenomenon could well be in the service of the "center"—providing rhetorical value and focus for behavior no longer socially useful while leaving the new social system focused on the urban core free to go about its business. Morris similarly distinguishes between Ionian and Dorian cult practice.[97] He suggests that the hero-cults could have been a way the old aristocracy, antagonistic to *polis* ideals, worked to maintain their traditional legitimacy. But again, I believe we must leave open, with the model of Chrétien in mind, the equally plausible scenario that, both hero-elevating texts and hero-cults in fact served the *polis*. I would certainly agree with Morris' plea for a plurality in the readings of text and cultic practices. At the same time, to his opposition of *either* "justify(ing) aristocratic powers in the face of the rising *polis*" in one place *or* helping to legitimate a new urban elite by asserting links with the past in another,[98] I would add that by displacing the former heroic tradition of independent action into the literary and ritual domain, such texts and cult practices would in fact serve the interests of the *polis* in *both* of his cases, and indeed fulfill both of his functions simultaneously, in some cases.

   This perspective allows for a more nuanced reading of the early hero-cults, as well as of the Homeric texts. Once the primary concerns of the early state are established, we are forced, on additional grounds

---

the materials from Lefkandi are used to suggest a well-established hero-cult tradition by at least the tenth century.

   [95] See S. Hiller, "Possible Historical Reasons for the Rediscovery of the Mycenaean Past in the Age of Homer," in Hägg, ed. (supra n. 83) 9–15; Whitley (supra n. 87); I. Morris (supra n. 84).

   [96] Whitley (supra n. 87) 178–179, 181.

   [97] I. Morris (supra n. 84) 756–757.

   [98] Ibid., 757, 758.

to those delineated by Snodgrass, to abandon the early hypothesis that the Homeric texts *caused* the cults, or that either texts or Olympic games served as major catalysts for the spread of the cults.[99] Rather, all of these phenomena—games, cults, and texts—would have sprung from the same social and cultural needs, and served the same social and cultural ends: the displacement of a former code of values and behavior into particular, rhetorical channels subject to containment, thereby permitting the development of a new code of values and behavior more appropriate to contemporary social and political developments.

In many respects, what I am suggesting echoes the analysis of Bérard, which linked "heroization" to the formation of the city (i.e., the city-state).[100] I am also suggesting, while at no time denying the powerful aesthetic and emotional impact of the poetic experience, that the codification of the Homeric poems may have been a fundamental part of this social process.[101]

This view fits especially well with the provocative conclusions arrived at by West in his recent study of the rise of the Greek epic. In a series of essentially linguistic and philological arguments, West concludes that the *Odyssey* in particular represents not an "eastern Ionian" composition, as has generally been thought, but rather a "central" (Euboean) or "western Ionian" (Attic) work.[102] Of these options, West and others tend to incline toward Euboea, which, with its high coefficient of social stratification and extensive commercial and colonial enterprises, best matches the profile of a region that *should* be producing the *Odyssey*.[103] This is particularly compelling if we see the epic, along with hero-cults and games, as the product of cultural processes congruent with early

---

[99] As per Hiller (supra n. 95) 13.

[100] C. Bérard, "Récuperer la mort du prince: heroisation et formation de la cité," in G. Gnoli and J.-P. Vernant, eds., *La mort, les morts, dans les sociétés anciennes* (Cambridge 1982) 89–105.

[101] Supported as well in Nagy, *Greek Poetics* (supra n. 63) 10–11; see also, Sherratt (supra n. 78) 808, who reviews those archaeologists and historians who have stressed the "role of epic in the establishment and enhancement of social and political structures."

[102] West (supra n. 78) 166.

[103] For the particular nature of the Euboean city-states, see Forrest (supra n. 58); Boardman (supra n. 58); P. Carlier, *La royauté en Grèce avant Alexandre* (Strasbourg 1984); Runciman (supra n. 58) 368ff. Circumstantial support of this profile may be found in Hesiod's reference (*Op.* 654–659, cited by Whitley [supra n. 87] 175) to the elaborate and "heroic" funeral games of Amphidamas of Chalcis in Euboea. Further discussion of this event may be found in Runciman (supra n. 58) 369, where his description of the games suggests very close parallels to those described in Homer.

state-formation, in which heroic action and archaizing values are at once glorified and displaced onto a rhetorical plane, in order to make way for institutions and values more appropriate to new forms of socio-cultural organization.

It is within this frame, I believe, that we can best account for the way in which Phoenicians are represented in the Homeric texts, especially the more negative characterizations of the *Odyssey*.

The complex social and commercial organization of the Phoenicians reconstructable historically for the period in which the epics would have been consolidated has been discussed at length above, and contrasted with the reductive picture contained in the texts. At the same time, it can be argued that the reality of the Phoenicians would have been well known to the Greeks of the period, with Phoenician cities possibly providing an external model to shape the internal developments leading to the Greek *polis*.[104] The borrowing and assimilation of artifact types, and the general impact of Phoenician and general Levantine art forms during this period, a phenomenon already occurring in the "Geometric" and clearly acknowledged in the naming of the "Orientalizing" period in Greece, can also be amply demonstrated.[105] It has even been suggested that not only Phoenician goods but Phoenicians themselves were resident in Euboea and Crete, as well as in the colony of Pithekoussai.[106] Certainly, the bronze-working implied in the very name of Chalkis in Euboea is reminiscent of the *polukhalkos* Phoenician, while the colonial and commercial activity of the newly formed Greek states paralleled closely that of the Phoenicians. Indeed, based on demonstrable Near Eastern literary parallels, West has gone so far as to propose that the *Odyssey* itself should be seen in the context of a time when Greek culture as a whole received important new stimuli from the Levant.[107]

Yet, in the *Odyssey*, the commercial activies of the Phoenicians are either corrupting or corrupt; Phoenicians are described as willing to

[104] Snodgrass (supra n. 79) 32; Runciman (supra n. 58) 369.

[105] G. Kopcke, "What Role for Phoenicians?" in Kopcke and Tokumaru, eds. (supra n. 6) 103–113; W. Burkert, *The Orientalizing Revolution: Near Eastern Influence on Greek Culture in the Early Archaic Age*, trans. M. E. Pinder and W. Burkert (Cambridge, Mass. 1992) 14–24; Morris (supra n. 43) passim; Carter (supra n. 43).

[106] For Euboea and Crete, see Popham et al. (supra n. 15), J. N. Coldstream, "Greeks and Phoenicians in the Aegean," in Niemeyer, ed. (supra n. 5), Shaw (supra n. 24), West (supra n. 78). For Pithekoussai, see Niemeyer (supra n. 12), Buchner (supra n. 20).

[107] West (supra n. 78) 170. See also Burkert (supra n. 105) 114ff.

break codes of honor for profit, much as Levantine merchants have been stereotyped throughout history in the West; and their behavior is set up as the antithesis of the heroic values of the Greeks. In short, in the epic Odysseus is what "man" should be—successful warrior, survivor, obedient to the gods and the king he serves, wily, but faithful to the social code;[108] the Phoenician sailors are the "other"—makers and merchants as opposed to warriors, associated with no gods or family ties, deceitful, disrespectful of accepted codes of hospitality and friendship, unbound by social constraints. In contemporary social life, by contrast, the Phoenicians may well have been models for newly emerging Greek social roles; at the very least, they constituted significant parallels in mercantile activities and important sources for desirable goods.

I believe this analysis moves us a step closer to understanding the complex double role played by Homer's Phoenicians. On the one hand, they represent the "different and foreign" of the traditional enemy, and we must read them in terms of alterity;[109] on the other hand, they represent a projection of the social and economic present, the becoming "self," and we must read them with all of the ambivalence and discomfort, denial even, that contemporary Greeks must have felt about the changes their society was presently undergoing.

Two competing scenarios offer themselves as possible social contexts for the foregoing. If, with West, one sees the *Odyssey* as a Euboean product, the complexity described above makes perfectly good sense. Phoenicians were clearly known, as we see from the archaeological evidence at Lefkandi and at Pithekoussai, which was an early Euboean installation; yet at the same time, if Boardman is correct in seeing Euboeans with special interest at Al Mina, and I am correct in seeing Al Mina as outside of Phoenician control and a competing port for Near Eastern goods going into the Mediterranean,[110] then the picture of parallel and negative attributes, fraught with ambivalence, with which the Phoenicians have been represented would fit the historical situation quite well indeed. It would work best with a date for the text

---

[108] All of the things at which Herakles fails, in Dumézil's early study of the function of the "warrior" in Indo-European tradition: G. Dumézil, *Aspects de la fonction guerrière chez les Indo-européens* (Paris 1956) 93–98.

[109] Vernant (supra n. 73) 30; Ribichini (supra n. 72).

[110] With J. Boardman, "Al Mina and History," *OJA* 9 (2) (1990) 169–190 and Kestemont (supra n. 7). See discussion above (n. 7) and also in Winter (supra n. 10) 21.

in the eighth century B.C., and in fact, it would be entirely consistent with West's argument for Euboean composition.

If, however, we leave open West's own possibility that the text could also have Attic ties, then the competition between Athens and Aigina in early trade becomes an equally interesting context for the poem. Sarah Morris has documented the seafaring skills of the islanders and their mercantile activities, along with the considerable number of Phoenician goods (including "lyre-player" seals) that turn up on the island, as well as the negative connotation of goods known as *aiginētika*—i.e., small trinkets circulated by island merchants.[111] These last bear a striking resemblance to the Phoenicians' *athurmata*, while the Aiginetan connection to Naukratis, in the direction of which Odysseus' fictive Phoenician sea captain was heading, is also notable. Indeed, Morris actually suggests that the qualities ascribed to the Aiginetans made them the Phoenicians of the Greek world.[112] The question then arises whether the qualities ascribed to "Phoenicians" might not actually represent a veiled reference to Aigina in an Attic composition. Such a construct would probably work best with a date for the text in the seventh century.

I must say that for the moment, I am more inclined toward the many consistencies evident in the "Euboean" scenario, not least of which is West's observation that hints of Euboeo-centricity are to be found in the reference to Euboea as the seafaring Phaeacians' furthest horizon (*Odyssey* 7.321–326); however, given the way in which later Athens claimed the poem, one could argue that Athens' investment goes back to the very fixing of the text.[113] Perhaps the next round of analysis must come from the philological side, toward a more precise dating and location of the final version of the text, before we can attempt to determine the best historical "fit" for its contents.

---

[111] Morris (supra n. 88) 92–96.

[112] Morris, ibid., 103.

[113] For Euboea, see M. L. West (supra n. 78) 172. But see also P. V. Jones, *Homer's Odyssey* (Bristol 1988) 66, re alternate views that the mention of Euboea is if anything pejorative—either suggesting that it is set at the ends of the earth or implying the provincialism of the Phaeacians in their lack of knowledge of the further north and east. Indeed, one could read the references to Euboea as an indication that we are on the fulcrum of the shift from Euboean to Athenian dominance in trade, which might in turn support the argument for Athens! (I am indebted to Fred Winter for this perspective.)

In any case, wherever and over however long a period the *Odyssey* as poetic enterprise is to be located, good historical circumstances exist that would help account for the particular roles in which Phoenicians are cast. And the more limited and descriptive roles attributed to the Phoenicians in the *Iliad* also make sense if that text continues to be seen as an essentially eastern Ionian product, consolidated sometime earlier than the *Odyssey*—when Anatolian Greeks could well have viewed the luxury-producing Phoenicians of the Eastern Mediterranean as a contemporary analogue for the earlier but equally eastern Trojans, yet without the added social charge of being in direct competition or identity conflict with them.[114] The differences in construction of the Phoenicians in the two texts thus falls into place as well.

In the end, it is the degree of constructedness that is so striking in the texts. At first, moved by the apparent verisimilitude of description, it is indeed tempting to read "The Phoenicians" from the poems, since there are "true" details presented. Then, as one gathers data, one begins to notice the absences: what is *not* being said also becomes revealing, and makes apparent those traits that have been reduced to formulaic stereotype in what *is* represented. Next, as one sees through comparison what elements and attributes are being set in opposition to the Phoenicians, their role as "other" emerges vis-à-vis a purported Greek ideal. But it is only when the sociocultural context is explored as well, that an even subtler role of ambivalent "self" is manifest in Greek attitudes toward the Phoenicians.

How the "self" is culturally constituted with respect to the identi-fication of, *with*, and against an "other" is currently a topic of wide-spread intellectual attention. Representing the other as opposite—and particularly, as exoticized, sensualized, savage, irrational opposite—is the better understood of these strategies.[115] Ribichini applied the prin-ciple directly to the representation of Phoenicians in Classical sources, observing a general pattern, from Homer to Herodotus, of character-izing in the negative all surrounding populations, which was itself part of a larger cultural design of recuperation and control of the social

---

[114] West (supra n. 78).

[115] E. Shohat, "Imaging Terra Incognita," *Public Culture* 3 (1991) 59. In this respect, the "ethnic" otherness of the Phoenicians in the Homeric poems plays the same role as racial otherness does in later Western literature—see K. A. Appiah, "Race," in F. Lentricchia and T. McLaughlin, eds., *Critical Terms for Literary Studies*, (Chicago and London 1990) 274–287, esp. 281.

environment.[116] Tamara Green has suggested that the creation of the "other" in texts like the Homeric epics was a way for Greeks to assert their own view of cultural norms.[117] This is also the theme of the recent book of François Hartog, *The Mirror of Herodotus*, the subtitle of which, *The Representation of the Other in the Writing of History*, implies his agenda of cultural constitution.[118] And yet, the ambiguities inherent in the issue should not be obscured. Perhaps the clearest exposition is to be found in Todorov's study of the conquest of America, in which he first defines "the other" as "…exterior to interior…female to male…poor to rich…crazy to normal…or another society to one's own…near or far…on the cultural, moral or historical level" and then argues that, in fact, to identify the "exterior" is to discover the "other" in oneself.[119] It is useful to consider, therefore, whether in the Homeric texts as well it is in relation to the "other" that the ideal "self" is both defined and integrated. In such a view, the Phoenicians would represent what the Greeks need to socialize, what they fear most to be in the new social order, and what they are most mindful of becoming.

A long-standing enmity between Greece and the peoples of Asia is observed by Ribichini in Herodotus and Thucydides as well as in Homer. In this perpetuation of a traditional "other" we see the seeds of an early "orientalism," so powerfully raised with regard to classical scholarship by Bernal,[120] and responded to in the recent publications of Sarah Morris. One of Morris' principal points is that it is not only classical scholarship in the recent West, but the Classical Greeks themselves, who evinced discomfort in acknowledging, and so often obscured, their enormous debts to the Levant, at the same time as they absorbed, and even admired, so many of its goods and traditions.[121]

---

[116] Ribichini (supra n. 72) 446, 448.

[117] T. M. Green, "*Black Athena* and Classical Historiography: Other approaches, other views," in *Arethusa, Special issue* (1989) 55–65.

[118] Translated by J. Lloyd (The New Historicism: Studies in Cultural Poetics 5) (Berkeley 1988).

[119] T. Todorov, *La conquête de l'Amérique, la question de l'autre* (Paris 1982) 11, 252.

[120] M. Bernal, *Black Athena: The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization I: The Fabrication of Ancient Greece* (New Brunswick 1987).

[121] Morris (supra n. 42) 40–41; eadem (supra n. 43) passim. As a gloss on this, see Sherratt (supra n. 78), who notes that ostentation—and particularly the consumption of high-value goods like those preferred by the Phoenicians—is frequently characteristic of periods of social and political fluidity, when new groups and individuals jostle for power and so engage in display.

I would stress that this pattern can be seen already in the Homeric treatment of the Phoenicians. It should probably come as no surprise that an "Orientalizing" period should be one most prone to "orientalism." From Said's important study of 1979 to its myriad offshoots,[122] it is clear that a powerful component of orientalism is the attribution of the exotic, of luxury, and even of transgression to a putative "East"—an East constituted in an amalgam of both knowledge and prejudice, in which exoticism and xenophobia, constraint and desire, consumption and denial combine to tell us a great deal more about the "constructing" culture than about the constructed.

Such a pattern is all the more to be expected at critical junctures of nation- or, in this case, *state*-building. It should also not be lost sight of that for the Greeks, the period of state-building happened to coincide with a period of intensive mercantile development and colonization. In addition to all of the issues discussed thus far, the very fact of the Phoenicians' status in that mercantile world, as well as their already established colonies and mobility as seafarers, needs to be kept in focus. The composite picture presented in the *Odyssey* of the Phoenician king of Sidon acting according to proper rules of behavior, but his people on the seas clearly not observing the rules, leads one to wonder whether this is not an expression of the trepidation the Greeks must have felt anticipating the dispersal of their own population into the colonies and onto the seas of commerce. Seen through the lens of a nostalgia not only for the past but for the integrity of the "homeland," the particular state of Greek social (colonial) and economic, not just political, development becomes a significant factor in the representation of Phoenicians in the Homeric epics.[123]

Those texts most associated with national "identity" at a time of state-building, such as national myths of origin or epics, often contain highly developed expressions of the constitutive signs conveying "belonging" and "collective values."[124] In such texts, as in the construction of a national or civic identity itself, the oppositions of civilized vs. barbaric, law-based vs. lawless, fair vs. treacherous come to stand for the choices the socialized "citizen" must make in order to belong, and in order

---

[122] E. Said, *Orientalism* (New York 1979); T. Brennan, "The National Longing for Form," in H. Bhabha, ed., *Nation and Narration* (London 1990) 47.

[123] N. Purcell, "Mobility and the *Polis*," in O. Murray and S. Price, eds., *The Greek City from Homer to Alexander*, (Oxford 1990) 29–58.

[124] Brennan (supra n. 122) 44–70.

for the society to function.[125] This perspective helps us to read the Homeric construct of honor (and its opposites, shame and dishonor) at the explicit level within the text, and to see the representation of the Phoenicians with respect to Odysseus in particular, and Greeks in general, as a way of articulating Greek values. At the same time, if we understand nationalism, or state-ism, as a social process maintained at least in part by *not* articulating all of its political ideologies, but rather through allying itself with (an often fabricated) "tradition" that preceded it,[126] then the casting of a national text into a heroic past can be seen as part of the very process of state-formation.

Vance's understanding of the texts of Chrétien de Troyes helps to make clear that much can be happening at the nonexplicit level in providing channels or detours for collective energies. By his account, the "really vital problems that arise as the poetic mind reacts to change are expressed *beneath the narrative or thematic surface of a work*."[127] For this reason, at the most general level, any work that we call "literary" is by definition "suspect as a document of history."[128] And in particular, as noted by Runciman, "the *Odyssey* as a work of fiction is a poor guide to the sociological realities of contemporary Greece."[129]

That the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* are indeed "literary" constructs will come as no surprise to literary historians and classicists; but the point must be underscored for those who have optimistically sought to read "history" therein. To come to grips with the full complexity of the representational strategies involved in Phoenicians-as-trope in both the *Odyssey* and the *Iliad*, it is necessary to pursue not only an internal analysis of how they function structurally within the texts, but also an external analysis of how the texts themselves functioned in their contemporary world. Only with such an external analysis do the issues of purposeful selectivity, alterity, and "orientalism" take on a full complement of meaning.

Less a mirror of their time than a deflector, the Homeric texts elevate an ideal of the warrior-hero at the very moment that Greeks were embarking upon mercantile ventures not unlike those of the very

---

[125] Cf. J. Friedman, "Culture, identity and world process," in D. Miller et al., eds., *Domination & Resistance* (London 1989) 252.

[126] H. Bhabha, "Introduction," in Bhabha, ed. (supra n. 122) 1–7.

[127] Vance (supra n. 90) 557, emphasis added.

[128] Vance, ibid.

[129] Runciman (supra n. 58) 362.

Phoenicians whom the texts disparage. If we see the heroic ideal—of Odysseus no less than of Achilles—as a displacement, a detour around current social realities, and see the Phoenicians in terms at once of grudging respect for quality in manufacture, contempt with regard to social values, powerful ambivalence in commercial practice, and suspicion regarding the consequences of dispersal and mobility, then virtually all aspects of the way in which the Phoenicians are represented in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* can be accounted for. "Homer's Phoenicians," then, do not represent the world of the Phoenicians; rather, they present a masterful literary construct, at once produced by and working *to* produce the broader social, political, economic, and symbolic fabric of the early state in Archaic Greece.

Acknowledgments